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ABSTRACT

There is a growing recognition that a healthy transition to adulthood is a result of a complex process that starts as children move into their teen years. This has resulted in a call for funders, policymakers, and youth program operators to adopt a youth development approach by providing the developmental opportunities and experiences that all adolescents need. The basic youth development premise is that if young people are given the tools they need to master the developmental tasks of adolescence, fewer teens will make serious mistakes and unhealthy choices. To support a youth development approach, Public/Private Ventures conceived and planned a study of voluntary sector youth-serving organizations in order to define and develop measures to measure the effectiveness of organizations with regard to youth development experiences and to study the extent to which this type of approach is successful in achieving youth development goals. Measurement development work was conducted in five Boys and Girls Clubs, five Young Men's Christian Association sites, and five Girls Incorporated sites. Overall, results of the study are positive. They suggest that there is a feasible method for assessing the effectiveness of organizations implementing a youth development approach by measuring the quality of services in the present. Results also suggest that when a youth development approach is taken, organizations can attract and hold the interest of adolescents and become an effective means of achieving developmental goals without focusing on youth deficits and problems. Three appendixes discuss site selection, methodology, and risk behaviors. (Contains 1 figure, 6 appendix tables, and 17 tables.) (SLD)

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Safe Havens

The Contributions of Youth Organizations to Healthy Adolescent Development

Michelle Alberti Gambone
Amy J.A. Arbreton

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FOREWORD

Since the late 1980s, there has been steadily increasing dissatisfaction with the "deficiency-oriented" approach that has dominated youth programming in the public policy arena over the past several decades. That dissatisfaction arose in part from the very modest long-term results of this approach, and in part from increased advocacy of helping youth "develop" rather than aiming to "repair" them. That advocacy—represented in its initial stages most articulately and forcefully by Karen Pittman—was buttressed by an expanding and consistent body of scientific and theoretical literature about how humans develop.

As the "youth development" approach gained support, it was accompanied by two important questions: How do you "do" youth development? And how do you know whether you've done it well?

Those two questions have occupied a critical place on P/PV's agenda during the 1990s. Our work on mentoring, especially on the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, has helped clarify important aspects of how to "do" youth development—and what it can accomplish.

This study, though less definitive than the BBBS work, is in some ways more ambitious, as we have tried to flesh out more fully the concrete components of youth development programming, and tried to measure their utility. We feel that good progress has been made on both these fronts, and that the study will help advance the usefulness of the "youth development" approach.

We are very encouraged by the substantive findings that at-risk youth participate at significant levels, and benefit in so many ways—alongside youth who are not at risk. These findings should encourage our thinking and our actions about how to expand "preventive" activities in resource-poor areas without stigmatizing youth in the process.

Gary Walker President	Jean Baldwin Grossman Vice President and Director of Research and Evaluation

I. BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

Adolescence is the critical stage between childhood and adulthood. By its nature, navigating this transition can be a time of growth and discovery, a time of fear and failure, or both, for adolescents. The adults in their lives must master the role of providing a proper balance of autonomy and support so critical to making this transition successfully. As young people move through this stage of development, less of their time is automatically structured and they become more eager to make their own choices about how to use their "discretionary" time. As adults try to support an adolescent's transition, they too must make a transition, moving from the role of "parent" who makes choices for a child, to that of "manager" who guides the choices made by an adolescent.

Adolescence in the 1990s is made even more challenging for those experiencing it and those around them, because of the increasing number and accessibility of dangerous alternatives for time use when young people are not in school; and because of the uneven availability of safe and healthy activities with enough appeal to attract and hold the attention of young people who are practicing to be adults (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1992).

Successfully navigating this critical transition can, in large part, depend on the availability of opportunities to engage in positive activities, and supportive relationships with adults that provide a "scaffolding" for the developmental process (Tierney and Grossman, 1995; Eccles et al., 1993; Wood, 1986; Bruner, 1983; Scales, 1991). But, too often, adolescents have limited access to these supportive opportunities and relationships. The consequence is often too much discretionary time, more unhealthy behaviors, more life stress, and more difficulty forming healthy connections to other people and to jobs. This is especially true in impoverished communities where resources for youth are severely limited (Panel on High-Risk Youth, 1993).

For the past two decades, social policies and programs have tried to address these consequences by "fixing" the problems that emerge—such as teen pregnancy, school dropout, drug addiction, joblessness—with targeted, short-term interventions aimed at undoing damage. Ultimately, however, a consensus was reached that short-term interventions produce short-term solutions. Categorically funded interventions aimed solely at remediating specific negative behavioral consequences of adolescents' mistakes were judged to be, ultimately, ineffective as a strategy for achieving the desired positive, long-term social outcomes. (See, for example, Zaslow and Takanishi, 1993; Walker and Vilella-Velez, 1992; Smith and Gambone, 1991.)

But with the growing recognition that a healthy transition to adulthood is the result of a complex process that starts as children move into their teen years, scholars, advocates and practitioners began urging funders, policymakers and program operators to adopt a "youth development" approach. That is, a call went out to begin reducing the number of young people at risk of failing to make healthy transitions to adulthood by providing the developmental opportunities and experiences that all adolescents need in order to avoid major setbacks and emerge as healthy young adults. The basic "youth development" premise is that if young people are given the developmental tools needed to master the tasks of adolescence, fewer teens will make the serious mistakes and unhealthy choices whose consequences, in the end, require public intervention.

Advocates of this approach have won rather broad acceptance for it—in principle. But, in practice, funders and policymakers have been struggling with how a developmental approach can be expanded and broadened at a time when funds for youth are shrinking—and when the watchword for all social programs is "outcomes" accountability. The notion of a preventive, developmental approach that keeps young people on track is hard to dismiss, but the question of how to hold practitioners of this approach accountable for achieving "healthy youth development" presents a serious quandary. Indeed, the absence of standards and measures by which to judge a developmental rather than remedial approach to youth services left many in the position of having to support this approach on the strength of its logic alone—a serious obstacle to its widescale adoption.

It was in this context that P/PV conceived and planned a study of voluntary sector youth-serving organizations (VYSOs) with a mission and history of promoting healthy childhood and adolescent experiences. To address the gap in developmental standards, P/PV saw a need to: (1) define and develop a set of measures that could be used to evaluate the effectiveness of organizations in terms of youth development experiences; and (2) find an arena for examining the extent to which this type of approach is successful in achieving youth development goals.

In order to define a set of core experiences important for a healthy adolescence, we drew on theories and research on adolescent development and on discussions with youth services providers. We identified, and developed measures for, seven developmental experiences consisting of key "supports" and "opportunities." These are: sense of safety; challenging and interesting activities; sense of belonging; supportive relationships with adults; leadership; input and decision-making; and community service. Youth who experience these types of developmental opportunities and supports are more likely to have a healthy, hope-filled and productive adolescence, and ultimately to mature into responsible, skilled and competent adults.[1]

The arena chosen to examine whether a developmental approach to serving adolescents can provide youth with these experiences are affiliates of three of the country's largest, most stable VYSOs—Boys and Girls Clubs, Girls Incorporated, and YMCAs. These organizations were selected for three reasons. First, while their programs and service strategies differ, they are similar in that they aim to draw youth solely by the appeal of their environments and activities; and provide youth with experiences that are both intrinsically valuable because of their significance to a healthy adolescent experience and as building blocks to healthy adult functioning. Second, they are diverse enough in their structure (one serves mainly girls, one is intergenerational, and one serves both boys and girls) to allow a variety of other organizations to benefit from the study's conclusions. Finally, these three organizations are among those with the largest youth participation and have strong, stable and consistent support from funders and community residents throughout the nation. For these reasons, these VYSOs were seen to represent an opportunity to investigate a range of issues critical to sustaining support for the youth development approach.

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[1] See Chapter II for explanations of these developmental opportunities and the longer-term outcomes associated with these experiences.

STUDY ISSUES

As a starting point, fundamental questions needed to be addressed: (1) whether such "developmental" settings attract a diverse group of youth, or only those who are unlikely to make the choices in adolescence that lead to consequences requiring public intervention; (2) whether youth spend enough time in these environments for participation to constitute a significant experience in their lives; and (3) what types of positive structured and unstructured activities youth are drawn to in these settings.

A fourth, more complex issue addressed was whether measures could be developed and used to systematically document whether the type of youth-serving strategy these VYSOs take offers adolescents the developmental supports and opportunities critical to making a healthy transition to adulthood. This was seen to be a central issue in judging the viability of widespread adoption of a youth development approach. If the developmental properties of non-remedial activities could be measured systematically and with discriminative power, this would be a feasible strategy for evaluating the extent to which organizations and activities achieve developmental goals. Whether the developmental goals are conceived as means to the end of reducing social problems (i.e., building blocks for healthy adult functioning), or as ends in themselves (i.e., a healthy adolescent experience), such a measurement strategy would offer a mechanism for holding youth development organizations accountable for what they control—the developmental quality of the experience.

In an effort to adopt an accountability approach, many organizations have been compelled to use outcomes over which they have no direct control (e.g., school completion, job attainment, healthy family formation) as their measure of success; primarily because these outcomes are at least measurable. The problem with this approach is that these ultimate outcomes, in fact, result from a diverse set of experiences (in the family, school, neighborhood, etc.); no one setting or experience alone can be expected to produce them. Focusing on the achievement of these future long-term outcomes does not provide a standard by which an organization or activity can be held accountable in the present.

Therefore, this study's goal of developing and demonstrating an alternative method for evaluating the quality of activities and experiences deemed to be "developmental" was crucial. If successful, a further benefit would be that youth services can be judged, in the present, on whether they are equally effective in achieving developmental goals with youth from a variety of backgrounds and experiences.

The measurement strategy was tested in five affiliates of each of the three national organizations (see Appendix A for a fuller description of the site selection process). Assessing this measurement strategy required testing it in arenas where a developmental approach was, in fact, being implemented. Site selection was intended to maximize the likelihood that sites would have already implemented a developmental approach successfully, in order to show whether youth organizations can produce these types of environments and thus allow firm conclusions to be drawn about the feasibility of the measurement strategy. However, the specific findings about the youth and their experiences from this small sample of exemplary sites cannot be generalized to all VYSOs.

Three separate, detailed reports were written on the research findings in the sites of each of the national organizations.[2] The purpose of this report is to synthesize these findings as they relate to each of the central study issues listed above.

OVERVIEW OF STUDY FINDINGS

Overall, the results of the study are positive and provocative, and point in productive directions for youth policy. The findings have led to two general conclusions. First, there is a feasible method for assessing the effectiveness of organizations implementing a youth development approach—a method that measures the quality of the services in the present. Second, and more important, when a youth development approach is undertaken as these organizations did, it can both attract and hold the interest of adolescents, and can become an effective means for achieving developmental goals for a wide variety of youth without focusing on deficits or problems.

Specifically, in addressing the first questions of whether this type of youth-serving organization (those with a youth development approach) can attract a diverse group of adolescents, what activities they engage in, how much time they spend at VYSOs, and what these youth do outside of the VYSOs, we found that:

- The study site participants were diverse in age (spanning the adolescent years), ethnicity, poverty status and family composition.
- Many of the youth who participated had characteristics of those typically believed to be at risk of failed transitions (i.e., experimenting with alcohol and drugs, being suspended from school, being sexually active, being arrested or belonging to gangs).

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[2] These separate organizational reports provide specific site descriptions and details on mission, goals, staffing, funding and programming that are not presented here.

- About one-quarter to one-third of these adolescents chose to spend a significant proportion of their "discretionary" time in these settings, attending almost every day; and between one-third and two-thirds maintained their participation over a number of years.

- Fully one-quarter to one-half of these youth were not participating in any of the other common healthy alternatives for using leisure time (e.g., other youth organizations; school-based clubs and activities; or adult-led activities, such as scouts or mentoring).

Regarding the issues of whether the developmental properties of the relationships with adults and experiences in these settings could be measured systematically and reliably; and whether these organizations were achieving developmental goals for significant proportions of their participants, we found that:

- The developmental properties of participation in these activities could be systematically measured in terms of the supports and opportunities experienced by youth.

- Fully 80 percent of the youth participating in these activities were obtaining three or more of the seven developmental building blocks (experiences and supports) measured, with 25 percent receiving six or more.

- For the most part, these benefits were being derived equally by youth, regardless of poverty status or risk profile.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The next chapter briefly covers the study methodology, including information on the seven developmental areas, the site selection strategy and data collection methods. (Additional information on study methods is in Appendix B.) Chapters III and IV examine the questions of who the youth are who come to these VYSOs, and how they use their time inside and outside the VYSO.

Chapter V details the key findings for each of the developmental supports and opportunities: whether youth receive these benefits and in what proportions, and the organizational features (both structures and practices) that are linked to these experiences and were found to be shared by these sites.

Chapter VI presents an analysis of whether youth who use the facility differently, and/or have different demographic characteristics or risk behaviors, have more or less positive developmental experiences at these VYSOs. The final chapter briefly discusses the policy implications of the research findings and areas for further research.

II. STUDY METHODOLOGY

The general methodology used to address the study questions included tracking attendance and activities at sites, a survey of adolescents' experiences, and conducting site visits to collect data on organizational structure and practices. Table 1 outlines the data sources used in the research and summarizes the type of information gathered from each source. (Details about instrument development, data collection techniques and analysis strategies are in Appendix B.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

The most basic questions considered in this study were: whether these organizations attract a diverse group of youth and whether youth participate with enough intensity for the experience to play a significant role in their lives. To gather data in a uniform manner, P/PV hired locally based research assistants to monitor the attendance of youth between the ages of 10 and 18 over a four-week period during the school year.[3] The data collected included demographic information about each participant coming through the doors, as well as fairly specific information about their use of the facility.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES: MEASURING SUPPORTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The study was also designed to document whether developmental benefits were being derived from participation in VYSOs, and if so, to identify critical organizational features and program practices that promote these types of positive youth experiences. Rather than studying outcomes that might reflect only one national organization's program goal, the research identifies and focuses on a set of seven key developmental areas that constitute a youth development approach and that are common to the missions of all three national organizations represented in this study. To define the target areas for measurement, we drew from past academic research in the field of youth development, from previous studies conducted by or for the youth-serving organizations, and from conversations with representatives of each national organization about their goals for youth.

The seven developmental supports and opportunities identified and measured are particularly relevant to and beneficial for a healthy adolescence; thus, documenting the extent to which these VYSOs are successful in providing youth with these experiences has value first as a marker of current program quality. In addition, participation in activities or environments that provide these supports and opportunities has been found to be associated with longer-term positive outcomes for youth.

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[3] The four-week periods were in Fall 1995 or Spring 1996. These periods were selected in consultation with the sites in order to avoid school breaks or other factors that could induce unusual patterns of participation.

Table 1

DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY

Key Variables	Data Sources
Youth Participation Patterns	Youth Survey/Attendance
Youth Experience of Opportunities and Supports	Youth Survey
Youth Background and Characteristics	Youth Survey/Attendance
Organizàtional Programs, Practices and Policies	Staff Interviews/Observations
Staff Views of Youth	Staff Interview
Descriptive Organizational Features	Staff Interview

1. A Sense of Safety. VYSOs work to provide "safe havens" in response to a growing need to protect youth from increased violence and opportunities for dangerous behaviors (Pittman and Wright, 1991). Indeed, when young people are provided with safe and healthy activities in which to participate during critical gap periods—before and after school, on weekends, during school vacations and summers—they are less likely to have time to participate in the high-risk, unhealthy activities that can delay or derail positive development (Panel on High-Risk Youth, 1993; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1992; Medrich, 1991).

2. Challenging and Interesting Activities. VYSOs seek to provide a range of activities, encouraging youth to broaden their horizons and helping them to find areas that match their interests and skills. Having the chance to engage in novel and interesting tasks complements young people's need to fashion an expanded sense of competence (Epstein, 1988). Further, when young people are provided choices of activities that are attractive to them given their ages and interests, that are easily accessible and affordable, and that involve peers whom they value, they are more likely to participate (Hultsman, 1992; Medrich, 1991); consequently, they are less likely to get involved in vandalism, drug use and other high-risk behaviors (Schinke, Orlandi and Cole, 1992).

3. A Sense of Belonging. VYSOs provide a healthy context in which adolescents can meet their need to be recognized and valued by others for their accomplishments and achievements (Erikson, 1986). Particularly as adolescents begin to explore who they are and what their role in society will be, access to positive settings that provide them with the opportunity for meaningful and active participation can decrease the likelihood of their involvement in gangs, delinquency and violence (Scales, 1991; Benson, 1990). Further, a greater sense of membership and belonging in groups has been linked to a greater ability to take account of the perspectives of others and a greater sense of responsibility (Conrad and Hedin, 1982); improved self-competence (Lerner, 1995); and more positive attitudes toward and better performance in school (Slavin, 1991).

4. Social Support from Adults. Beyond providing a safe environment with interesting activities to draw youth, VYSOs emphasize the supportive and caring role of staff. All young people need adults in their lives who know and care about what they do, and can provide guidance, emotional support and instrumental assistance (e.g., help with homework, tutoring and job referrals). This support is critical as youth navigate multiple developmental changes and transitions (Eccles et al., 1993; Erikson, 1986). Research shows that young people who have adults as a source of support in their lives have lower levels of stress, make better decisions and experience higher academic achievement (Furstenberg, 1993; Scales, 1991; Rutter, 1987; Werner and Smith, 1982). In addition, research on the Big Brothers Big Sisters program found that participation in the program helped young people avoid initiating drug and alcohol use and begin to improve their school behavior and performance (Tierney and Grossman, 1995).

5. Input and Decision-Making. VYSOs attempt to respond to young people's growing need for autonomy by involving youth in decisions and allowing them to make their own choices about how to spend their time. Settings that allow for and encourage participation in decision-making have been found to be associated with more positive developmental outcomes (Midgley and Feldlaufer, 1987; Grolnick and Ryan, 1987). For example, in providing youth with the opportunity to make real decisions about the things that affect them, VYSOs also help to foster a sense of sharing and the development of mutual respect among youth and between youth and staff (Collins, 1984).

6. Leadership. By providing youth with real leadership opportunities—for example, meaningful participation in activities that can shape their lives, and exposure to situations in which they can use their developing skills to solve real problems—VYSOs allow youth to practice roles relevant to future jobs or careers (Scales, 1991). By providing youth with opportunities to take responsibility for planning and carrying out activities, VYSOs help young people learn to take others into account as they make decisions and choices and develop a greater sense of responsibility (Conrad and Hedin, 1982).

7. Volunteer and Community Service. VYSOs strive to get youth involved in helping others in their neighborhood and in the community, both through volunteer work and by taking an advocacy approach. Doing community service work can help youth build a greater sense of self-competence and self-respect (Lipsitz, 1984). Young people also begin to forge a sense of attachment to the community and to others with whom they work (William T. Grant Foundation, Commission on Youth, Family and Citizenship, 1988), ultimately leading to greater tolerance of others and more positive attitudes toward performance in school and elsewhere (Newman and Rutter, 1983). Further, youth participation in volunteer helping roles has been linked to decreases in problem behaviors (Switzer et al., 1995).

To assess youth's experience of these seven developmental supports and opportunities through their facility-based involvement in VYSOs, a survey of youth aged 10 to 18 was conducted at each study site.

To examine how VYSOs provide supports and opportunities for youth, two researchers visited each site and interviewed the staff who work with youth aged 10 to 18, asking them to report on VYSO-wide practices and policies. Table 2 outlines what was covered in the interviews: the developmental areas and potential practices and organizational features that were hypothesized to promote each experience.

STUDY SITES

The study's data base includes case studies of five local affiliates of each of three national organizations. The study sites were:

Table 2

PROGRAM PRACTICES AND ORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES HYPOTHESIZED TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH HIGH LEVELS OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCES

Developmental Area	Program Practices and Organizational Features Examined
Leadership	• Formal opportunities (e.g., leadership training, service, councils and governing positions) • Informal opportunities (e.g., group leaders, team captains, representatives, helping roles) • Job opportunities
Social Support from Adults	• Staff structure (e.g., staff stability, staff-to-youth ratio, formal matches of staff to youth) • Organizational practices and/or expectations (e.g., staff meeting time, time and space for informal staff/youth interaction, outside life connection)
Belonging	• Designating youth-"owned" space (e.g., teen center, youth-decorated space) • Reinforcing group membership (e.g., orientation, ID cards, logo-bearing paraphernalia, recognition and award ceremonies) • Group assemblies (e.g., common space, youth and staff meetings) • Opportunities to contribute (e.g., help with fundraising, VYSO improvement) • Staffing (e.g., ethnic and gender representation)
Challenging and Interesting Activities	• Providing a range of activities (e.g, daily, weekly, monthly) • Providing unique activities (i.e., different from youth's typical) • Matching individuals to programs • Providing adult support and recognition for skill mastery • Using a process for developing a program calendar that includes youth input

Table 2 (continued)

PROGRAM PRACTICES AND ORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES HYPOTHESIZED TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH HIGH LEVELS OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCES

Developmental Area	Program Practices and Organizational Features Examined
Input and Decision-Making	• Allowing youth input into VYSO-wide policy, practices and program offerings (e.g., youth councils, youth surveys, youth representation on committees or boards) • Promoting decision-making regarding program/activity selection (e.g., sign-up sheets, free-choice activity periods) • Allowing choice within activities
Community Service	• Formal service clubs • Service projects
Safety	• Safety within the building (e.g., door monitoring, rules for behavior) • Safe passage to and from the VYSO (e.g., transportation, escorts)

- **Boys and Girls Clubs**
  - Boys and Girls Club of Boston, South Boston Clubhouse;
  - Boys and Girls Club of Chicago, Logan Square Clubhouse;
  - Boys and Girls Clubs of Metro Denver, Owen Branch;
  - Madison Square Boys and Girls Club, Hoe Avenue Clubhouse, Bronx, New York; and
  - Columbia Park Boys and Girls Club, San Francisco.

- **Girls Incorporated**
  - Girls Incorporated of Metropolitan Dallas (West Dallas Center);
  - Girls Incorporated of Delaware (Greater Newark Branch);
  - Girls Incorporated of Sioux City, Iowa (Westside Center);
  - Girls Incorporated of Rapid City, South Dakota, a program of Youth and Family Services; and
  - Girls Incorporated of Omaha, Nebraska (Development Center).

- **YMCA**
  - Old Fort Branch YMCA in Fort Wayne, Indiana;
  - Linwood Branch YMCA in Kansas City, Missouri;
  - Newark YMWCA in Newark, New Jersey;
  - Flushing YMCA and its Beacon Center in Flushing, New York; and
  - Davis-Scott Branch YMCA in San Antonio, Texas.

Selection of the sites was based on several factors: the large number of youth between ages 10 and 18 served by facility-based programming;[4] programming and activities that exemplify the mission of the national organization; the facility's location in a low-income urban neighborhood; significant levels of youth participation from the surrounding neighborhood; and the relative stability of the facility's funding. (See Appendix B for more details on the site selection process.)

Although there are many service strategies used by organizations interested in youth development (e.g., outreach, advocacy, etc.), we focused this study on the neighborhood facility-based service strategy taken by these agencies because of the heightened need for and interest in providing "safe havens" for youth. Facility-based programming presents a strategy whereby VYSOs have the capacity to become safe havens to which youth can return over time, have a real voice and choice in what they do and how they do it, and within which they can establish long-term supportive relationships with adults and with other youth.

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[4] These organizations also reach other youth through outreach strategies.

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF VYSO PARTICIPANTS

One of the basic goals of this study was to collect systematic information to answer the fundamental questions: who comes to VYSOs—what type of adolescents; and do they spend enough time there for participation to matter? All the study sites collect information on how many youth come to their facility each day. But because of the expense and time required, they do not, for the most part, keep records in a way that can be used to answer these questions.[5] So, as part of this study, a data collection system to monitor facility usage at the study sites was instituted for a four-week period in either Fall 1995 or Spring 1996. This chapter and the next report on the analyses of these data and of youth questionnaire data to answer these basic questions.

WHO COMES TO VYSOs?

Since this study focused on pre-adolescents and adolescents, information was collected on the number of 10- to 18-year-olds who came to the main facilities of the study sites and the degree of their diversity in terms of age, gender, race, household composition, poverty, risk profile, and other free-time activities. While many of the YMCA and Girls Incorporated study sites serve youth in a variety of settings outside their facilities, this study focuses on the particular model of serving youth in a neighborhood club or center. Therefore, all information presented here pertains to the 10- to 18-year-olds who participated in activities that took place at these neighborhood centers and clubs during the four-week study period.

First, we calculated the unduplicated number of adolescents who used these sites over the four-week study period, that is, how many different youth used these facilities once or more over the course of a month. Table 3 shows clear differences in the number of youth served by three study organizations. Boys and Girls Clubs study sites served between 130 and 346 different adolescents over the four-week study period; Girls Incorporated study sites served between 54 and 101 pre-teen and teen girls; and the YMCA study sites served the largest number of youth, ranging from 219 to 678 at the individual sites.

Age

A frequently asked question about VYSOs is whether they continue to attract youth once they become teenagers. To explore this issue, we examined the age distribution of the group of youth who used the VYSOs during the study period. The attendance data indicate that a rather large percentage of the adolescents at many study sites were aged 14 and over. (See Table 3.) But again, there were differences by organization. In general, Girls Incorporated had the smallest percentages of older teens (aged 14 and up) ranging from 7 percent to 42

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[5] Two Girls Incorporated sites were exceptions: they had computerized systems that with minor modifications could be used to collect this information.

Table 3

UNDUPLICATED ADOLESCENTS ATTENDING STUDY SITES OVER A FOUR-WEEK PERIOD (BY AGE AND GENDER)

BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS

	#	%	Male	Female
Boston (South Boston)				
Age: 10-11	147	52%	48%	52%
12-13	78	28	54	46
14-15	36	13	53	47
16-18	22	8	77	23
Totals	**283**	**100**	**52**	**48**
Average Age	12.0 yrs	-	12.3	11.7
Chicago (Logan Square)				
Age: 10-11	52	24%	50%	50%
12-13	47	21	66	34
14-15	63	29	57	43
16-18	58	26	83	17
Totals	**220**	**100**	**64**	**36**
Average Age	13.8	-	14.1	13.1
Denver (Owen Branch)				
Age: 10-11	46	35%	85%	15%
12-13	34	26	72	18
14-15	31	24	61	39
16-18	20	15	80	20
Totals	**131**	**100**	**78**	**22**
Average Age	12.8	-	12.7	13.3

Table 3 (continued)

UNDUPLICATED ADOLESCENTS ATTENDING STUDY SITES OVER A FOUR-WEEK PREIOD (BY AGE AND GENDER)

	#	%	Male	Female
New York (Hoe Avenue)				
Age: 10-11	76	22%	51%	49%
12-13	113	33	66	34
14-15	67	19	67	33
16-18	90	26	78	22
Totals	**346**	**100**	**66**	**34**
Average Age	13.6	-	13.9	13.0
San Francisco (Columbia Park)				
Age: 10-11	50	28%	80%	20%
12-13	71	39	79	21
14-15	40	22	90	10
16-18	20	11	60	40
Totals	**181**	**100**	**80**	**20**
Average Age	12.8	-	12.8	12.9

GIRLS INCORPORATED

	#	%	Male	Female
Dallas (West Dallas)				
Age: 10-11	13	24%	-	100%
12-13	20	37	-	100
14-15	13	24	-	100
16-18	8	15	-	100
Totals	**54**	**100**	-	**100**
Average Age	13.1	-	-	100

Table 3 (continued)

UNDUPLICATED ADOLESCENTS ATTENDING STUDY SITES OVER A FOUR-WEEK PREIOD (BY AGE AND GENDER)

	#	%	Male	Female
Newark DE (Greater Newark)				
Age: 10-11	23	32%	-	100%
12-13	18	25	-	100
14-15	20	28	-	100
16-18	10	14	-	100
Totals	**71**	**100**	-	**100**
Average Age	13.1	-	-	100
Omaha (Development Center)				
Age: 10-11	57	65%	-	100%
12-13	25	28	-	100
14-15	6	7	-	100
16-18	0	0	-	100
Totals	**88**	**100**	-	**100**
Average Age	11.3	-	-	100
Rapid City				
Age: 10-11	60	59%	-	100%
12-13	27	27	-	100
14-15	7	7	-	100
16-18	7	7	-	100
Totals	**101**	**100**	-	**100**
Average Age	11.7	-	-	100

Table 3 (continued)

UNDUPLICATED ADOLESCENTS ATTENDING STUDY SITES OVER A FOUR-WEEK PREIOD (BY AGE AND GENDER)

	#	%	Male	Female
Sioux City (Westside Center)				
Age: 10-11	45	63%	-	100%
12-13	9	13	-	100
14-15	13	18	-	100
16-18	4	6	-	100
Totals	**71**	**100**	-	**100**
Average Age	11.9	-	-	100

YMCA

	#	%	Male	Female
Flushing (Beacon and Main Site)				
Age: 10-11	188	28%	58%	42%
12-13	217	32	64	36
14-15	186	27	76	24
16-18	87	13	76	24
Totals	**678**	**100**	**67**	**33**
Average Age	13.0	-	13.2	12.6
Fort Wayne (Old Fort)				
Age: 10-11	64	29%	37%	63%
12-13	51	23	58	42
14-15	43	20	72	28
16-18	61	28	75	25
Totals	**219**	**100**	**60**	**40**
Average Age	13.5	-	14.2	12.5

Table 3 (continued)

UNDUPLICATED ADOLESCENTS ATTENDING STUDY SITES OVER A FOUR-WEEK PREIOD (BY AGE AND GENDER)

	#	%	Male	Female
Kansas City (Linwood)				
Age: 10-11	52	23%	52%	48%
12-13	60	26	57	43
14-15	65	28	65	35
16-18	51	22	77	23
Totals	**228**	**100**	**62**	**38**
Average Age	13.5	-	13.9	12.9
Newark NJ				
Age: 10-11	77	20%	71%	29%
12-13	84	22	73	27
14-15	111	29	69	31
16-18	115	30	73	27
Totals	**387**	**100**	**71**	**29**
Average Age	13.9	-	13.9	13.8
San Antonio (Davis-Scott)				
Age: 10-11	119	26%	76%	24%
12-13	120	26	73	27
14-15	112	24	60	40
16-18	106	23	59	41
Totals	**457**	**100**	**69**	**31**
Average Age	13.4	-	13.2	13.9

percent of the sites' participants. The Boys and Girls Clubs sites had between 21 percent and 45 percent of their participants in this older group, and the YMCA sites between 40 percent and 59 percent. In fact, in six of the 10 YMCAs and Boys and Girls Clubs, about one-quarter or more of the youth who came to their facilities were aged 16 and over. Overall, these findings are encouraging, given that participation in these organizations depends on their appeal to adolescents who are beginning to make their own choices about free-time activities. These numbers indicate that the VYSOs are, in fact, attracting teenagers.

Gender

While the study sites have for the most part achieved diversity regarding the age of their participants, this is not the case with gender. In the Boys and Girls Clubs study sites and the YMCA sites—organizations that serve both genders—the large majority of participants during the study period were male. (See Table 3.) Only one YMCA site (Fort Wayne) and one Boys and Girls Club site (Boston) had as many as 40 percent girls among their participants. In the rest of the sites, only about one-quarter to one-third of the participants were female. In one case, San Francisco Boys and Girls Club, the site had only started to admit girls one year before the study, possibly explaining the low proportion of girls there. Of note, however, is that the number of girls participating at the YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs sites is comparable to the number participating at Girls Incorporated sites.[6]

Ethnicity, Household Composition and Poverty

For the most part, the ethnicity of the participants at any given site reflected the ethnic make-up of the neighborhood or area being served by the facility. (See Table 4.) While two sites had a majority of white participants (Boston and Sioux City), others were predominantly African American (e.g., Omaha and Kansas City), Hispanic (Denver), or had ethnically mixed participant groups (Chicago, Rapid City and Flushing).

In eight of the 15 study sites, a majority of participants lived with a single parent. (See Table 5.) The Boston Boys and Girls Club and Flushing YMCA had the largest proportions of participants living with both parents (66% and 62%, respectively). The Dallas Girls Incorporated site and Fort Wayne YMCA had the largest percentages of adolescents living with an "other relative" (e.g., a grandparent)—23 percent and 13 percent, respectively. At the other sites, this group represented less than 10 percent of participants.

In 10 of the 15 study sites, more than half of their participants (between 56% and 89%) reported that they received "free or reduced-price lunch" at school (to qualify, a family must be defined as living in poverty) (see Table 5); another three sites had nearly half their participants in this category (47% or 49%). The remaining two sites, the Boston and San Francisco Boys and Girls Clubs, had 25 percent of their participants reporting they received free or

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[6] Girls Incorporated's mission is to serve girls, so at these sites, all youth 10 and over participating in Girls Incorporated programming were female.

Table 4

ETHNICITY OF PARTICIPANTS AGED 10 TO 18 ATTENDING STUDY SITES OVER A FOUR-WEEK STUDY PERIOD

	African American	Asian	Hispanic/Latino	Native American	White	Other
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS						
Boston (South Boston)	2%	0	0	0	98%	0
Chicago (Logan Square)	51	2%	43%	0	1	3%
Denver (Owen Branch)	5	8	78	5%	5	0
New York (Hoe Avenue)	54	0	45	0	1	0
San Francisco (Columbia Park)	24	13	49	2	8	4
GIRLS INCORPORATED						
Dallas (West Dallas)	93%	0	6%	0	2%	0
Newark DE (Greater Newark)	74	0	6	0	17	3%
Omaha (Development Center)	90	0	1	0	9	0
Rapid City	1	1%	4	43%	29	12
Sioux City (Westside Center)	26	0	11	4	57	1
YMCA						
Flushing (Beacon and Main Site)	12%	35%	29%	1%	20%	4%
Fort Wayne (Old Fort)	92	1	0	0	6	1
Kansas City (Linwood)	99	0	0	0	1	0
Newark NJ	77	1	17	0	3	2
San Antonio (Davis-Scott)	58	0	34	0	8	0

Table 5

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND FREE LUNCH STATUS OF PARTICIPANTS AGED 10 TO 18 ATTENDING STUDY SITES OVER A FOUR-WEEK PERIOD

	HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION				FREE LUNCH STATUS
	Two Parents	One Parent	Other Relative	Other	% Receiving
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS					
Boston (South Boston) (N=280)	66%	29%	5%	0%	25%
Chicago (Logan Square) (N=220)	18	65	7	10	71
Denver (Owen Branch) (N=131)	42	57	1	0	65
New York (Hoe Avenue) (N=346)	37	53	9	1	89
San Francisco (Columbia Park) (N=178)	49	42	2	7	25
GIRLS INCORPORATED					
Dallas (West Dallas) (N=55)	5%	71%	23%	0%	65%
Newark DE (Greater Newark) (N=71)	48	51	0	1	49
Omaha (Development Center) (N=84)	48	46	2	3	62
Rapid City (N=105)	54	43	1	3	49
Sioux City (Westside Center) (N=72)	48	34	9	8	74
YMCA					
Flushing (Beacon and Main Site) (N=646)	62%	33%	1%	4%	47%
Fort Wayne (Old Fort) (N=215)	35	51	13	1	62
Kansas City (Linwood) (N=229)	20	70	7	4	58
Newark NJ (N=387)	27	55	9	9	56
San Antonio (Davis-Scott) (N=454)	57	35	8	0	66

reduced-price lunch. In all sites, this method of measuring poverty might have resulted in an underestimate of the proportion of adolescent participants who live in poverty because some youth who are eligible for this government program may not, in fact, take part in it. In the San Francisco and Boston Boys and Girls Clubs in particular, the executive directors reported that many of the sites' participants come from families living in poverty, but attend private schools that do not participate in the government program. Nevertheless, these numbers indicate that the study sites served a group of adolescents who appear to come from families with different income levels—many living in poverty.

RISK BEHAVIORS AND PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZED FREE-TIME ACTIVITIES

Another question often raised about these organizations is whether they attract only the "good" kids and the "joiners" who would be involved in organized, free-time activities even if not at the VYSO. The survey addressed this question, and the participants at these VYSOs again proved to be a varied group of adolescents.

The data include information on a variety of behaviors often used as indicators that adolescents are at risk of not making a healthy transition to adulthood, including alcohol use, drug use, gang involvement, being arrested, being suspended from school, and being sexually active. Tables on each of these individual characteristics, included in Appendix C, show significant variation, both within an organization and across organizations, in the degree to which youth have engaged in each type of activity.

School suspension is the most commonly shared "risk" experience, with between one-fifth and two-thirds of the VYSO participants reporting at least one suspension from school. Between 8 percent and 40 percent of the girls at different sites reported drinking alcohol in the last four weeks, with the range for boys being 16 percent to 41 percent. Overall, boys were more likely than girls to report having used drugs in the last four weeks: in eight of the 15 sites, less than 10 percent of the girls reported this behavior; while in six of the 10 sites with boys participating, 20 percent or more boys reported this behavior. A greater proportion of boys than girls also reported having had sexual intercourse at least once and having been arrested at least once. The lowest frequencies of the risk behaviors were seen in reported gang membership for boys and girls—with most sites having 10 percent or less of the youth in this category.

Table 6 shows a summary measure used to indicate the proportion of youth who reported having at least one of four risk factors (alcohol use in the last 30 days, drug use in the last 30 days, gang membership, and/or being arrested).[7] Overall, these proportions range from about one-quarter to about two-thirds of the youth. Thus, it appears that these organizations do attract more than just the "good" kids.

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[7] There is evidence that involvement in one of these four major risk behaviors is predictive of involvement in one or more of the others; and they have been found to be associated with concurrent mental and physical health problems during adolescence (Dryfoos, 1990).

Table 6

RISK INDEX FOR YOUTH AGED 10 TO 18 (BY GENDER AND SITE)

	MALE			FEMALE		
	YES	NO	MISSING	YES	NO	MISSING
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS						
Boston (South Boston) (N=282)	60% (83)	27% (40)	17% (25)	35% (47)	40% (53)	25% (34)
Chicago (Logan Square) (N=219)	59 (83)	18 (25)	23 (32)	62 (49)	36 (28)	3 (2)
Denver (Owen Branch) (N=132)	40 (41)	33 (34)	26 (27)	71 (21)	27 (8)	2 (1)
New York (Hoe Avenue) (N=345)	47 (107)	38 (88)	15 (34)	34 (39)	65 (76)	1 (1)
San Francisco (Columbia Park) (N=181)	28 (41)	65 (93)	7 (10)	59 (22)	35 (13)	5 (2)
GIRLS INCORPORATED						
Dallas (West Dallas) (N=55)	-	-	-	13% (7)	78% (43)	9% (5)
Newark DE (Greater Newark) (N=71)	-	-	-	21 (15)	73 (52)	5 (4)
Omaha (Development Center) (N=89)	-	-	-	15% (14)	73% (65)	11% (10)
Rapid City (N=105)	-	-	-	53 (56)	40 (42)	7 (7)
Sioux City (Westside Center) (N=71)	-	-	-	31 (22)	69% (49)	0 (0)
YMCA						
Flushing (Beacon and Main Site) (N=646)	25% (112)	69% (315)	6% (28)	38% (73)	58% (111)	4% (7)
Fort Wayne (Old Fort) (N=214)	41 (53)	50 (64)	9 (11)	14 (12)	79 (69)	6 (5)
Kansas City (Linwood) (N=229)	62 (89)	32 (45)	6 (9)	36 (31)	59 (51)	4 (4)
Newark NJ (N=387)	44 (121)	50 (139)	5 (15)	28 (31)	71 (79)	1 (2)
San Antonio (Davis-Scott) (N=454)	46 (144)	47 (148)	6 (19)	45 (64)	55 (78)	0 (0)

Note: The risk index is Yes to one or more questions on alcohol, drug use, gang membership and arrests.

To explore whether VYSO participants seem to be "joiners" who are involved in a number of organized activities in their free time, youth were asked whether they participated in other organized, after-school activities in addition to the study VYSOs. Based on past research on economically distressed communities (for example, Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1992), it was hypothesized that a significant number of these youth might not be active in other settings that convey the same benefits of participation as the study organizations, since their communities often have limited youth resources. Table 7 shows that, on average, about one-quarter to one-third of these youth were also participating in adult-led activities (such as scouts or mentoring); with about the same proportion attending activities at other organizations. Most encouragingly, a very large proportion of the adolescents from these VYSO study sites were also participating in at least one school team or club—between one-half and three-fourths.

Although a number of these youth do report participation in other organized free-time activities, it was also of interest to note how many were not participating in other structured activities outside the VYSO. By creating an index of the other activities, it can be seen that, in fact, many adolescents were not engaged in other organized activities. (See Table 8.) For boys in six of the 10 study sites, one-quarter to one-third were not engaged in any of these other activities; and about another one-quarter to one-half were engaged in only one other type of activity. For girls in seven of the 15 study sites, one-quarter to one-half were not participating in any of these other activities; as with boys, about one-quarter to one-half were participating in only one other type of activity. For both boys and girls, the one other activity was most likely to be a school team or club.

The fact that many youth were not participating in other structured activities (or in only one other) could be due to either their own choice to participate solely, or primarily, in the VYSO, or to the fact that other opportunities do not exist in their neighborhoods. Unfortunately, we do not have the data to determine which is the case. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of these adolescents do seem to use the VYSO as their primary out-of-school activity.

SUMMARY

In exploring what types of adolescents participate in VYSO organizations, this study found that the answer is all types. For all characteristics examined, there was sufficient diversity among participants at the sites to indicate that these organizations do not appear to do anything that either excludes or attracts one particular "type" of adolescent; further, one type of youth does not exclusively self-select participation in these organizations. These sites attract both older and younger adolescents of mixed ethnicity, mixed income levels, mixed household composition, mixed "risk" profiles, and a mixed propensity to be "joiners"—that is, to participate in other structured activities outside of their school hours.

Gender is the only exception to this finding of diversity. The number of girls at the Boys and Girls Clubs and YMCAs are small relative to boys, even in sites where girls have been

Table 7

TYPE OF ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE VYSO IN WHICH STUDY ADOLESCENTS PARTICIPATE (BY SITE AND GENDER)

	Adult-Led Activities		School Clubs/Activities		Activities at Other VYSOs	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS						
Boston (South Boston)	33%	13%	61%	63%	35%	21%
Chicago (Logan Square)	31	33	93	82	59	44
Denver (Owen Branch)	26	23	45	58	25	35
New York (Hoe Avenue)	22	24	73	65	21	32
San Francisco (Columbia Park)	20	37	60	65	32	43
GIRLS INCORPORATED						
Dallas (West Dallas)	-	55%	-	76%	-	50%
Newark DE (Greater Newark)	-	42	-	58	-	39
Omaha (Development Center)	-	49	-	46	-	73
Rapid City	-	1	-	21	-	67
Sioux City (Westside Center)	-	42	-	79	-	59
YMCA						
Flushing (Beacon and Main Site)	17%	29%	62%	53%	21%	33%
Fort Wayne (Old Fort)	10	23	67	60	37	40
Kansas City (Linwood)	53	26	85	73	77	37
Newark NJ	25	33	78	79	34	27
San Antonio (Davis-Scott)	35	2	86	79	30	24

Table 8

NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE VYSO IN WHICH STUDY ADOLESCENTS PARTICIPATE (BY SITE AND GENDER)

	MALE				FEMALE			
	Number of Outside Activities				Number of Outside Activities			
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS								
Boston (South Boston)	37%	24%	11%	28%	28%	50%	18%	4%
Chicago (Logan Square)	5	35	33	27	9	41	31	19
Denver (Owen Branch)	34	48	5	13	40	20	24	16
New York (Hoe Avenue)	24	49	15	12	27	32	34	6
San Francisco (Columbia Park)	34	29	28	9	30	28	10	32
GIRLS INCORPORATED								
Dallas (West Dallas)	-	-	-	-	6%	27%	48%	19%
Newark DE (Greater Newark)	-	-	-	-	9	53	26	11
Omaha (Development Center)	-	-	-	-	9	27	50	14
Rapid City	-	-	-	-	24	63	12	1
Sioux City (Westside Center)	-	-	-	-	10	28	33	28
YMCA								
Flushing (Beacon and Main Site)	34%	40%	16%	9%	42%	22%	13%	22%
Fort Wayne (Old Fort)	21	49	24	5	25	33	35	6
Kansas City (Linwood)	3	26	23	47	14	47	28	10
Newark NJ	10	56	20	13	15	50	14	20
San Antonio (Davis-Scott)	10	43	30	16	18	60	19	2

admitted for years. It is unclear whether this stems from the appeal of activities offered by the organizations or from the need for girls to spend their time in other endeavors (e.g., childcare, housework, etc.).

IV. PROGRAMMING AND YOUTH ATTENDANCE

The previous chapter described the diverse group of adolescents who use these youth-serving organizations. Here, the primary question is whether these organizations hold youth's attention for a period long enough for participation to constitute a significant experience. We examine questions about programming and attendance, such as: How much time during the out-of-school hours are youth spending at these places? Have they been coming to these places since they were much younger or is their involvement more recent? When they do come to the VYSO, what kinds of things do they do there?

In fact, the attendance data indicate that in six sites, one-quarter or more of the adolescents who attend spend as much as three hours or more every day, or almost every day, in these facilities in the after-school hours. Further, the survey data suggest that at many sites, over half the youth have been coming to these places for two and a half or more years, with boys exhibiting longer tenure than girls. Although sports activities appear to be particularly well-attended at these youth-serving organizations, adolescents also engage in other types of educational, arts, and leadership and community service activities. And many youth seem to be attracted to these places because they provide safe settings to simply "hang out" and interact with peers and adults.

This chapter examines youth attendance and usage patterns, how these patterns vary by youth gender and age, and differences in the structure of programming at the different sites that might explain some of the variation in the patterns described above.[8] Later in the report, differences in participation patterns are analyzed to examine whether they correlate with the developmental experiences youth receive.

HOW OFTEN DO YOUTH COME TO THE FACILITY?

To put participation in VYSOs in the context of the adolescents' daily lives, the proportion of their out-of-school time spent each week at the VYSO was calculated. According to NELS data,[9] the average eighth-grader spends between two and three hours a day at home alone after school. These hours have been shown to be those when many youth engage in high-risk behaviors due to lack of supervision. In theory, therefore, between 10 and 15 hours of high-risk after-school hours could be filled by VYSOs on weekdays. The attendance data gathered show that the young people in this study were spending an average of between three and nine hours a week at the study facilities, with an overall average of about five hours a week. Adolescents spent the most time at Boys and Girls Clubs, averaging between five and nine hours a week; at one site (New York), some youth spent as many as 32 hours a week at the

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[8] For this portion of the analysis, gender, age and site differences were examined descriptively; they were not tested for statistical significance.

[9] 1988 National Educational Longitudinal Survey, cited in Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1992.

Club. The Girls Incorporated participants spent, on average, between three and one-half to six hours per week at the facilities, with some girls spending as much as 22 hours a week there. For the YMCAs, on average, youth spent between two and four hours a week at the site, with some spending as much as 20 hours a week in facility-based activities.

Table 9 summarizes the proportion of youth who attended each of the sites with greater and lesser frequency. Of note, at four of the five Boys and Girls Clubs, approximately one-quarter of the youth came to the facility every day or almost every day. And at two of the Girls Incorporated centers, approximately one-third of the girls participated that frequently. In contrast, a smaller proportion of youth (ranging from 3% to 15%) attended the YMCAs with such frequency.

The average number of times males and females came to the facility and the average number of hours they typically stayed, displayed in Table 10, shows a slightly more consistent picture across the organizations. That is, looking across all the sites, youth attended between once and twice a week and typically stayed about one or two hours per visit, with some variation. There were differences between males and females in their frequency of attendance, but these differences were not consistent from site to site. In most sites, the oldest youth (16 to 18 years old) tended to spend slightly less time at the facilities.[10]

The differences in how programs are offered to youth at the sites suggests one explanation for why Boys and Girls Clubs, for example, have a greater proportion of youth participating every day or almost every day than do the YMCAs, where youth came less frequently over a four-week period. At Boys and Girls Clubs, the clubhouses are open after the school day, and the programming is offered primarily on a drop-in basis. The way programming is structured, youth can move from room to room and activity to activity, participating as they choose in different types of activities that are going on around the clubhouse. In contrast, the more typical format at the YMCAs is for youth to sign up for an activity that will take place at a specified time (e.g., gymnastics instruction for six consecutive Thursdays from 4 to 5 p.m.), come that day for that particular activity, then leave. Girls Incorporated centers typically have activities for a youth in a particular age range to do each day—so girls might come only on days with activities that look particularly interesting to them. Like the Boys and Girls Clubs, Girls Incorporated does not usually require preregistration for a class or activity. Girls can just show up or "drop in" for most of the offerings.

The number of days and hours that facilities were open did not appear to explain differences in attendance patterns. The YMCAs are open every weekday, and in some cases both weekend days. The Boys and Girls Clubs are more typically open five weekdays and all day Saturday; most Girls Incorporated centers in the study are open four days during the week and only on occasional Saturdays.

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[10] The exceptions were the San Antonio YMCA, and the Boston and San Francisco Boys and Girls Clubs, where the oldest group spent as much or slightly more time at the facilities.

Table 9

PARTICIPATION RATES OF STUDY YOUTH OVER A FOUR-WEEK PERIOD (BY SITE AND GENDER)

	1 to 2 times		3 to 6 times		7 to 12 times		13 or more	
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS								
Boston (South Boston)	14%	24%	28%	25%	29%	26%	29%	24%
Chicago (Logan Square)	35	30	26	30	28	24	11	15
Denver (Owen Branch)	27	28	39	21	25	24	8	28
New York (Hoe Avenue)	34	36	21	18	25	22	20	24
San Francisco (Columbia Park)	26	24	20	22	24	32	31	22
GIRLS INCORPORATED								
Dallas (West Dallas)	-	46%	-	15%	-	9%	-	30%
Newark DE (Greater Newark)	-	41	-	38	-	11	-	10
Omaha (Development Center)	-	11	-	17	-	38	-	34
Rapid City	-	57	-	21	-	16	-	6
Sioux City (Westside Center)	-	51	-	29	-	16	-	3
YMCA								
Flushing - Beacon Site	45%	49%	35%	33%	12%	10%	8%	8%
Flushing - Main Site	66	66	17	14	14	16	3	3
Fort Wayne (Old Fort)	64	48	25	37	9	10	2	5
Kansas City (Linwood)	58	55	21	21	9	10	12	14
Newark NJ	51	68	20	18	21	13	7	2
San Antonio (Davis-Scott)	40	43	35	33	22	22	3	3

Source: Attendance Data

Table 10

AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS AND HOURS PER DAY PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED STUDY SITES OVER A FOUR-WEEK PERIOD (BY SITE AND GENDER)

	Average number of days[a]		Average number of hours per day[b]	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS				
Boston (South Boston)	8.8	7.8	3.0	2.4
Chicago (Logan Square)	5.8	6.2	2.4	2.2
Denver (Owen Branch)	5.7	7.6	3.7	3.6
New York (Hoe Avenue)	7.0	7.1	2.9	3.0
San Francisco (Columbia Park)	8.4	7.8	3.3	3.0
GIRLS INCORPORATED				
Dallas (West Dallas)	-	7.7	-	1.9
Newark DE (Greater Newark)	-	5.1	-	1.9
Omaha (Development Center)	-	9.5	-	2.1
Rapid City	-	3.8	-	3.7
Sioux City (Westside Center)	-	4.0	-	2.7
YMCA				
Flushing - Beacon Site	4.4	4.3	2.1	1.8
Flushing - Main Site	3.2	3.6	2.0	2.4
Fort Wayne (Old Fort)	3.1	3.9	1.7	1.5
Kansas City (Linwood)	4.5	4.7	1.9	2.2
Newark NJ	4.5	3.0	2.2	2.3
San Antonio (Davis-Scott)	4.4	4.4	2.2	2.0

Source: Attendance Data

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[a] Scale: actual days.
[b] Scale: actual hours.

HOW LONG HAVE YOUTH BEEN COMING TO THE CLUB/CENTER/BRANCH?

To estimate the length of adolescents' involvement at each VYSO, the survey included questions about how long youth had been coming to the study sites. Table 11 summarizes the results, showing the percentage of youth who have been coming for less than one year, for between one and two and a half years, and for over two and a half years. At all the Boys and Girls Clubs and three of the Girls Incorporated centers, from one- to two-thirds of the youth had been coming to activities for over two and a half years. Across all the sites, however, many youth had become participants more recently. Tenure of girls at Girls Incorporated was generally longer than at other study sites. Not surprisingly, older youth have, on average, been coming to these VYSOs for a longer period of time.

WHAT DO YOUTH DO AT THESE VYSOs?

One commonly held stereotype about these organizations is that they provide a narrow range of activities for youth—more specifically, that they are limited to "swim and gym" offerings. However, attendance data indicate that while sports activities are particularly popular and well-attended, they are far from the only activities in which these VYSOs engage youth. All three organizations offered other types of programs, such as arts and crafts or cultural awareness activities and assemblies. Youth also spent time hanging out with friends in the organizations' lounges or teen centers. Overall, youth come to these centers and do a variety of activities, including but not limited to sports.

Structured and Unstructured Programming

To understand better the proportion of youth who participate in sports in comparison to other types of programming, each site's attendance data were used to calculate the proportion of youth who participated in five different types of activities at least once over the four-week study period. The five activity areas are:

- Education/instructional activities (consisting of formal programs, such as pregnancy prevention and drug and alcohol awareness, as well as less formal instruction, computers, creative writing or homework time or help);
- Drop-in or unstructured sports and recreation activities (e.g., game room, open gym, pick-up basketball, lifting weights);
- Organized or structured sports (e.g., fitness classes, team sports, or sports skills classes);
- Arts and crafts (e.g., arts, photography, theater); and

Table 11

LENGTH OF VYSO MEMBERSHIP AMONG STUDY PARTICIPANTS (BY SITE AND BY GENDER)

	Less than 1 year		1 to 2½ years		2½ or more years	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS						
Boston (South Boston)	30%	26%	4%	7%	66%	67%
Chicago (Logan Square)	25	75	38	10	37	15
Denver (Owen Branch)	52	49	12	9	36	42
New York (Hoe Avenue)	49	46	22	24	29	30
San Francisco (Columbia Park)	35	70	16	26	49	4
GIRLS INCORPORATED						
Dallas (West Dallas)	-	22%	-	30%	-	48%
Newark DE (Greater Newark)	-	39	-	9	-	52
Omaha (Development Center)	-	68	-	13	-	19
Rapid City	-	79	-	10	-	11
Sioux City (Westside Center)	-	26	-	14	-	60
YMCA						
Flushing - Beacon Site	44%	49%	44%	29%	12%	22%
Flushing - Main Site	59	62	26	21	15	17
Fort Wayne (Old Fort)	17	60	17	24	64	17
Kansas City (Linwood)	61	70	16	24	23	6
Newark NJ	55	49	37	47	8	4
San Antonio (Davis-Scott)	51	41	17	57	22	2

Source: Survey Data

- Leadership/community service programs (e.g., jobs or volunteer helping activities around the VYSO, tutoring, or one of the formal or local leadership training programs or service clubs).

Table 12 summarizes the percentages of girls and boys who participated in each activity area. It shows relatively consistent levels across each of the Boys and Girls Clubs and Girls Incorporated sites in the program areas in which youth participate. In contrast, certain YMCA branches appear to disproportionately attract youth to their arts (Fort Wayne, Beacon, Kansas City), education (Beacon and Kansas City), or leadership programs (Beacon and Newark). This pattern might reflect, to some degree, that the influence of the national organization or a regional metropolitan office on program offerings is much stronger at the Boys and Girls Clubs local clubhouses and Girls Incorporated centers than at the YMCAs. The Boys and Girls Clubs and Girls Incorporated national organizations strongly encourage each affiliate to provide some type of programming in all the national's core areas. (See Table 13 for a listing of each National's core program areas for youth.) Typically, the national organization offers training and program resources for nationally developed programming and activities that fit into these core program areas; though local affiliates may develop their own materials and programs in addition to, or instead of, the national's.

Overall, Table 13 shows that at the Girls Incorporated centers, more youth participate in education/instructional activities than in any other activity area; this contrasts with youth participation patterns at the other organizations. This pattern is likely a function of the number of available educational opportunities at the Girls Incorporated sites. At Boys and Girls Clubs, too, a relatively large proportion of youth (about one-third, on average) participate in available education activities. Consistent with the stereotype of VYSOs, however, the most popular activities among both girls and boys at most Boys and Girls Clubs clubhouses and YMCA branches are sports and recreational activities, either structured or unstructured. These percentages provide a measure of the popularity of sports activities, and reflect the fact that the VYSOs have the capacity to serve a large number of youth in both of these activities (structured and drop-in sports).

Overall, arts and crafts and leadership/community service programs or jobs drew the fewest numbers of youth. The relatively large variation across sites in the proportion of youth who participated in arts and crafts activities most likely reflects the fact that some sites have separate, or more well-developed cultural arts departments that offer a wide array of crafts and fine arts instruction, project space and time. The relatively low proportion of youth who participate in leadership and community service activities might reflect the fact that only a few formal leadership programs were offered at any particular site, each of which served, in many cases, only 10 to 15 youth. This figure, however, represents youth who participated in formal leadership training programs or service clubs. It does not necessarily include other youth who might have been in leadership roles in other program areas, for example, serving as sports team captains or helping with younger children. (The number of youth who report being in leadership roles will be examined in a later section of the report.)

Table 12

PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH PARTICIPATING IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF ACTIVITIES OVER A FOUR-WEEK PERIOD (BY SITE AND GENDER)

	Arts and Crafts		Education		Leadership/Community Service		Organized Sport		Drop-In Sport	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS										
Boston (South Boston)	15%	25%	27%	46%	7%	4%	46%	47%	84%	65%
Chicago (Logan Square)	1	5	10	29	5	4	4	4	82	71
Denver (Owen Branch)	7	14	20	41	10	24	69	66	69	55
New York (Hoe Avenue)	2	5	20	44	5	19	43	42	87	79
San Francisco (Columbia Park)	27	30	33	51	7	27	13	0	95	84
GIRLS INCORPORATED										
Dallas (West Dallas)	-	15%	-	78%	-	26%	-	32%	-	11%
Newark DE (Greater Newark)	-	30	-	44	-	11	-	38	-	38
Omaha (Development Center)	-	1	-	97	-	19	-	34	-	16
Rapid City	-	25	-	62	-	60	-	12	-	56
Sioux City (Westside Center)	-	42	-	48	-	25	-	45	-	51
YMCA										
Flushing - Beacon Site	2%	21%	13%	18%	9%	28%	58%	31%	46%	28%
Flushing - Main Site	0	2	3	4	0	0	57	80	49	27
Fort Wayne (Old Fort)	20	64	0	2	0	8	13	28	84	45
Kansas City (Linwood)	6	17	45	50	0	5	29	33	73	64
Newark NJ	0	0	0	0	7	23	63	60	55	28
San Antonio (Davis-Scott)	0	0	1	2	0	0	52	36	74	61

Source: Attendance Data

Table 13

CORE PROGRAM AREAS BY ORGANIZATION

Girls Incorporated

- Careers and Life Planning
- Health and Sexuality
- Leadership and Community Action
- Sports and Adventure
- Self-Reliance and Life Skills
- Culture and Heritage

Boys and Girls Clubs

- Personal and Educational Development
- Citizenship and Leadership Development
- Cultural Enrichment
- Health and Physical Education
- Social Recreation
- Outdoor and Environmental Education

YMCA

- Aquatics
- Camping
- Child Care
- Community Development
- Family Development
- Health and Fitness
- Leadership and Sports

Although similar proportions of girls and boys participate in structured and unstructured sports activities, there were gender differences in the non-sports areas. A greater proportion of girls than boys who attend YMCAs and Boys and Girls Clubs participate in both formal leadership/community service activities, and arts and crafts programming. At Boys and Girls Clubs, girls are also more likely than boys to participate in education activities.

Differences in usage patterns by age were also found. Not surprisingly, in sites where formal leadership and community service programs are available, a greater proportion of older youth attended. On the other hand, only younger youth participated in arts and crafts, except in San Francisco and Fort Wayne, where it appears that strong arts programs continue to draw even the oldest youth. Both organized and unstructured/drop-in sports and educational activities drew similar proportions of youth from each age group.

HOW MUCH VARIETY DO YOUTH EXPERIENCE?

The previous section described the overall proportion of youth at a site who engaged in each type of activity area at least once over the four-week period of data collection. We also wanted to examine the patterns, or combinations of youth's participation. That is, what are the variety of activities in which an individual typically engages? For example, do youth generally limit their participation to only one type of activity (e.g., do youth in sports participate only in sports activities), or are they likely to get involved in a variety of activities? Table 14 summarizes data that address this question.

The most typical pattern at the YMCA sites appeared to be that youth engaged in one or two different types of activity over a four-week period, with close to 90 percent participating in only one activity. (Further analyses suggest that in most cases, this is a sports-related activity.) This pattern makes sense given the "session-oriented" programming at YMCA sites. Youth might have signed up for just one particular program during the four weeks; thus, variety at the YMCAs might be experienced more through signing up for a variety of sessions over a longer period.

In contrast, the Boys and Girls Clubs clubhouses and Girls Incorporated centers tended to have a greater proportion of youth who had participated in two to three programs of different types over the four weeks. These numbers might reflect the way programming is provided at these sites: multiple options offered on a daily or weekly basis, and youth allowed to more easily "drop" into an ongoing activity. The greater proportion of youth who engage in multiple program areas might also reflect the organization's emphasis on providing programming across program areas, as described earlier.

These data suggest that the organizations offer youth a wide range of activities—not limited to sports or educational activities—and many youth take advantage of this variety.

Table 14

VARIETY OF ACTIVITY AREAS AMONG PARTICIPANTS AT STUDY VYSOs (BY SITE AND GENDER)

	No Activities[a]		1 Activity Area		2 Activity Areas		3 Activity Areas		4 Activity Areas	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS										
Boston (South Boston)	7%	14%	56%	33%	28%	38%	7%	13%	1%	1%
Chicago (Logan Square)	15	19	72	54	12	23	1	4	0	0
Denver (Owen Branch)	7	21	68	28	19	28	7	24	0	0
New York (Hoe Avenue)	2	0	77	56	19	31	2	13	0	0
San Francisco (Columbia Park)	0	0	56	32	27	43	15	24	1	0
GIRLS INCORPORATED										
Dallas (West Dallas)	-	20%	-	33%	-	29%	-	13%	-	5%
Newark DE (Greater Newark)	-	11	-	53	-	17	-	17	-	1
Omaha (Development Center)	-	3	-	51	-	34	-	12	-	0
Rapid City	-	5	-	32	-	26	-	30	-	8
Sioux City (Westside Center)	-	28	-	15	-	22	-	23	-	11

Table 14 (continued)

VARIETY OF ACTIVITY AREAS AMONG PARTICIPANTS AT STUDY VYSOs (BY SITE AND GENDER)

YMCA

Flushing - Beacon Site	9%	9%	79%	69%	11%	19%	1%	2%	0%	1%
Flushing - Main Site	2	2	96	96	2	1	0	2	0	0
Fort Wayne (Old Fort)	1	3	86	60	13	36	0	1	0	0
Kansas City (Linwood)	1	3	57	56	37	27	4	10	0	3
Newark NJ	0	3	96	93	4	4	0	0	0	0
San Antonio (Davis-Scott)	0	0	99	98	1	2	0	0	0	0

Source: Attendance Data

Note: Organized and pick-up sports are combined as a single activity area.

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* Youth who have participated in no activities under examination most likely reported coming to the VYSO for a special event or to hang out at the facility only.

"Hanging Out" with Friends

Are these VYSOs places where youth engage solely in programs and activities, or is there also time for them to interact informally with their peers? To provide an indication of whether there was time for informal interaction with peers and adults that might produce greater opportunities for youth to form relationships at the VYSO, youth were asked whether they had spent time "hanging out" with their friends at the VYSO. Youth survey results summarized in Table 15 indicate that, on average, between two-thirds and three-quarters of the boys and girls who attend the VYSOs spent some time in this manner over the study month. The organizations work to provide a safe, unstructured environment for "hanging out." Lounges for youth, cafeterias or auditoriums, game rooms where youth can play pool or foozball, and blocks of "free time" generally allow space and encourage youth to spend time interacting with others. Boys and girls and youth of all ages tended to report having spent time "hanging out" at the VYSO.

WHY DO THE YOUTH COME TO THE CLUB/CENTER/BRANCH?

Many youth spend a great deal of after-school time and weekend hours at these facilities, engaged in a variety of activities or just "hanging out" with friends, in the comfortable environment provided by the VYSO. But what draws them to these places and potentially keeps them coming back? The data indicate that these are places where youth choose to participate and voluntarily attend because they are seeking fun and/or educational activities in an environment where adults help and care about them.

According to results from our youth survey, "I have a lot of fun here" was the reason most frequently rated very important by both boys and girls at both the YMCAs and the Boys and Girls Clubs. Across the Girls Incorporated centers, "I come because I learn a lot" was rated as very important by the highest proportion of girls. Other reasons for coming to the VYSO highly rated by a relatively large proportion of both girls at the Girls Incorporated centers and girls at the Boys and Girls Clubs were "Adults here care about me," and "Adults here help me with things." A large proportion of girls at the YMCAs reported that they come to the YMCA because they "learn a lot" and because their "friends are here." In contrast, boys at the YMCAs and at Boys and Girls Clubs were most likely to report "liking the activities" and "feeling safe when I'm here" as very important reasons for coming to the facility.

Several reasons for participation, all more external, were generally rated as not very important in motivating youth to come to the VYSO. For example, very few girls or boys at any of the sites rated "Parent/Guardian tells me to go," "There's food here," or "Judge or social worker told me I have to" as important reasons for coming.

SUMMARY

There is variability in attendance patterns, but the data presented here suggest that large numbers of youth spend a significant amount of their discretionary time in after-school hours

Table 15

PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS WHO REPORT "HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS" AT THE VYSO OVER A FOUR-WEEK PERIOD (BY SITE AND GENDER)

BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS

	Male	Female
Boston (South Boston)	94%	97%
Chicago (Logan Square)	80	82
Denver (Owen Branch)	96	100
New York (Hoe Avenue)	82	80
San Francisco (Columbia Park)	92	97

GIRLS INCORPORATED

	Male	Female
Dallas (West Dallas)	-	96%
Newark DE (Greater Newark)	-	99
Omaha (Development Center)	-	69
Rapid City	-	73
Sioux City (Westside Center)	-	67

YMCA

	Male	Female
Flushing - Beacon Site	70%	67%
Flushing - Main Site	45	74
Fort Wayne (Old Fort)	93	59
Kansas City (Linwood)	81	77
Newark NJ	69	51
San Antonio (Davis-Scott)	85	64

Source: Survey Data

at these VYSOs. Further, multiple types of activities are made available to youth—not just sports—and many youth take advantage of the variety of activities offered. In addition to participating in specific programs and activities, youth also find time to "hang out" with their friends. This variety of opportunity and mix of programming and "free space and time" might contribute to youth's perceptions of these places as fun and interesting, where they can learn a lot, and be in a safe environment with caring and supportive adults.

The next chapter examines the degree to which these "fun" activities provide youth with developmental supports and opportunities critical to a healthy adolescence.

V. WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION IN VYSOs DO FOR ADOLESCENTS?

A significant number of adolescents from diverse backgrounds and different life experiences attend these neighborhood facilities with a fair amount of regularity; participate in a range of activities when there; and do not participate in other positive, organized free-time activities. This leads to the question: what role or importance do these experiences have in adolescents' lives? This chapter is devoted to the exploration of the VYSO experience as a resource for healthy youth development. It explores both the extent to which adolescents get developmental benefits from participation, and the common developmental practices associated with these benefits that are used by these organizations.

WHAT DEVELOPMENTAL BENEFITS DO VYSOs PROVIDE—AND HOW DO THEY DO IT?

At a minimum, these VYSOs are providing a healthy, safe forum for leisure activities with adult supervision. But the main purpose of this study was to look beyond this and analyze the extent to which these organizations have created environments in which youth can experience developmental supports and opportunities that are critical in adolescence. The developmental areas examined are: leadership, social support from adults, sense of belonging, experience of challenging and interesting activities, opportunities for input and decision-making, sense of safety, and community service involvement.[11]

The study results show that, for six of the seven developmental areas examined, the majority of youth at each organization are deriving the desired benefits (i.e., developmental experiences) from participation. (The exception is community service experience, which only about one-quarter of the youth are receiving.) Further, the average adolescent in the study is receiving between three and four of the seven developmental experiences measured. In fact, nearly 80 percent of the VYSO participants are receiving developmental supports and opportunities in three or more areas, with one-quarter reporting developmental experiences in at least six of the seven areas. This indicates that, overall, the study sites are not only places where youth are safe and supervised, but are also organizations that have succeeded in implementing a youth development approach. The remainder of this chapter explores each of the developmental areas of the study, presenting the degree to which youth receive each support or opportunity, and illustrating the youth development practices used by these organizations to achieve these results.

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[11] The extent to which youth experience the seven developmental supports and opportunities through their facility-based involvement in VYSOs was determined in this study by conducting a survey of youth aged 10 to 18 at five exemplary affiliates of each national organization. Five of the seven areas of developmental supports and opportunities were measured through the use of multiple-time scales, and two constructs used single-item measures. Information on instrument development and measures can be found in Appendix A.

Table 16 shows the average levels (across the 15 study sites) at which youth have experiences in each of the seven developmental areas. The table also displays the proportion of youth whose scores reflect at least a moderate level of experience in each of the seven developmental areas.[12] In the following sections, the results for each area are summarized and the organizational practices in place at a majority of the study sites are highlighted.

Leadership

Youth were asked how often in the past year they had taken the opportunity to be in charge, to be in a helping role, and to be an active participant in the functioning of the organization and/or a particular group within the club.

- **Seventy-one percent** of the youth reported engaging in at least one **leadership** activity in the past year, with youth participating in between two and three different leadership opportunities on average.[13]

In assessing the extent to which the study sites offer leadership opportunities for adolescents, staff were asked to describe the formal and informal mechanisms for providing this experience. Staff were asked about opportunities within the facility as a whole, as well as within particular program offerings.

- All three organizations have national leadership training programs, and 13 of the 15 sites have chosen to include them in their offerings. The content of these programs is varied, ranging from service (e.g., Boys and Girls Club Keystone and Torch Club) to advocacy (e.g., Girls Incorporated Teens for Teens) to the political process (e.g., YMCA Youth in Government).

- In eight of the 15 sites, youth were involved in governance of the facility through participation in formal bodies. These included a range of opportunities, such as representation of activities on the board, membership on advisory or rules committees, and service as club officers.

- All 15 study sites offered a range of jobs and volunteer positions. These included acting as junior staff, coaching teams, officiating at sports events, tutoring peers,

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[12] Depending on the scale used in the questionnaire to measure a particular developmental area, moderate means having the experience sometimes or more frequently; feeling as safe or safer; having one or more leadership or community service experience; or having one or more relationships with a supportive adult.

[13] Leadership opportunities, in contrast to specific leadership activities in which youth participate, were measured through an eight-item scale gauging the number of opportunities in the last year youth had to "be in charge, to be in a helping role, and to be an active participant in the functioning of the organization and/or a particular group within the club." Therefore, although we earlier reported sites where few or no youth engaged in formal leadership activities, this measure was more broad and we found a greater number of youth being provided with these types of leadership opportunities.

Table 16

PARTICIPANT PERCEPTIONS OF SUPPORTS AND OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS STUDY SITES (BY GENDER)

	Male	Female	All	Scale
Leadership:				Count of 0 to 8 possible leadership opportunities
Mean	2.7	2.6	2.7	
Percentage ≥ 1	69%	74%	71%	
Social Support from Adults:				0 = None 1 = Only one 2 = Two or three 3 = More than three
Mean	1.2	1.4	1.3	
Percentage ≥ 1	62%	69%	65%	
Challenging and Interesting Activities:				1 = Never 2 = Almost never 3 = Sometimes 4 = Most of the time 5 = All of the time
Mean	3.0	3.2	3.1	
Percentage ≥ 3	58%	63%	60%	
Belonging:				1 = Never 2 = Almost never 3 = Sometimes 4 = Most of the time 5 = All of the time
Mean	3.1	3.3	3.2	
Percentage ≥ 3	58%	65%	61%	
Input and Decision-Making:				1 = Never 2 = Almost never 3 = Sometimes 4 = Most of the time 5 = All of the time
Mean	3.1	3.2	3.1	
Percentage ≥ 3	58%	62%	60%	
Safety:				0 = A lot less safe compared to other places 1 = A little less safe compared to other places 2 = Just as safe compared to other places 3 = A little more safe compared to other places 4 = A lot more safe compared to other places
Mean	2.0	2.1	2.0	
Percentage ≥ 2	62%	68%	64%	
Community Service:				0 = No, community service through VYSO 1 = Yes, community service through VYSO
Mean	.20	.29	.23	
Percentage ≥ 1	20%	29%	23%	

Source: Survey Data

working at the desk/door, monitoring younger children during meal times and other activities, running snack stands or stores, and providing orientation and tours for new members.

- At 10 of the 15 study sites, youth were offered opportunities to act as group leaders or representatives in positions including team captains, newsletter editors, and representatives and/or speakers to outside groups.

Social Support from Adults

Youth were asked about the number of adults at the center to whom they could turn for caring, guidance and recognition. This support included advice about personal problems, help in emergencies, encouragement for positive behavior/accomplishments, and knowing what is going on in a young person's life.

- **Two-thirds** of the youth indicated that there was at least one adult at the VYSO to whom they could go for this kind of **social support**. On average, youth reported there were from one to three adults at the VYSO on whom they could rely for different types of support.

Both structural features of the sites and staff practices were examined to explain youth's levels of social support from adults.

- While the overall staff-to-youth ratio varied from site to site, every site used strategies to keep the staff/youth ratios for specific structured activities, for the most part, around one staff for every 15 youth. The strategies they used to reach these levels included using volunteers, splitting the day for different age groups, and establishing smaller groups of youth around particular activities (e.g., "clubs within clubs").

- In nine of the 15 sites, there was a fair degree of staff stability, such that most of the key staff who work with youth had been at the site for more than two years. At four of the five Girls Incorporated centers, this longevity was not the case, though the level of adult support remained high. Negative effects of staff turnover at these sites may have been mitigated by the structured nature of the programming and consistency in staff training.

- All the sites' staff members kept themselves informed of the participants' outside lives through such practices as having participants bring in report cards; contacting families if a youth's participation dropped off (e.g., by letters or phone); asking friends why youth stopped participating; making school visits when problems occurred; and making counseling referrals.

- At 11 of the 15 sites, staff routinely devoted time to discussing youth's progress or problems with one another. In some sites, these were end-of-the-day discussions; in others, these discussions took place at formal weekly staff meetings.

- At 10 of the 15 sites, activities were scheduled so that time was available for informal interaction between staff and youth. Staff were allocated unscheduled, unstructured time and youth were at the VYSOs during "free" periods and had access to the staff. Staff circulate in snack rooms, lounge areas and recreation rooms when no specific activity is taking place. Office space is made available for private conversations, and staff are given the message that developing relationships with youth is a priority. The five sites that did not structure this type of free time into the program day were all YMCAs. It is difficult to know how significant this is, but in general, these sites did have slightly lower levels of adult support. According to staff at the YMCA sites, relationships with youth are an important part of their roles, but they had to find alternative opportunities to get to know youth.

Belonging

Youth feel a sense of belonging in an environment where their achievements are recognized, where they are made to feel that their ideas count and their presence matters and where they feel a sense of ownership and familiarity. Youth belonging, therefore, was measured as the degree to which youth felt the VYSO was a comfortable place where they felt their ideas were valued.

- Approximately **60 percent** of the youth reported that their clubhouse, branch or center is a place where they **belong**.

Both structural factors and practices that could enhance the participants' sense of belonging at these VYSOs were examined.

- In 12 of the 15 sites, the ethnic makeup of the permanent staff matched the ethnic makeup of the participants, helping to create an environment where youth have a sense of "fitting in" or comfort.

- Fourteen of the 15 sites had common space where youth congregate for unstructured activities, either recreation rooms, small meeting rooms, meal rooms or multi-purpose rooms. Further, 12 of the 15 sites made space available specifically for teens, by either designating teen lounges or designating specific times when the facility was open for teens only (e.g., evening hours or one weekend evening).

- At 12 of the 15 sites, staff reported numerous ways in which individual youth and teams were recognized for their accomplishments and participation in VYSO activities. These included awarding program completion certificates, posting or announcing school achievements, and holding sports banquets. Selecting youth of the week, youth of the month and youth of the year is a recognition practice specific to the Boys and Girls Clubs.

Challenging and Interesting Activities

This measure captures whether youth view the VYSOs as places where they have access to a variety of new, unique and interesting experiences and get to do things they do not do elsewhere.

- Approximately **60 percent** of respondents reported that, at least some of the time, they get opportunities for **challenging and interesting activities**.

Programming was hypothesized to be interesting and challenging to youth to the extent that it offered a range of activities, in terms of sheer numbers as well as the uniqueness of opportunities.

- All the study sites provided programming in a range of core program areas. Offerings are not limited to sports; they include leadership training, environmental programs, computer training, arts, community service, health, etc.
- At all the study sites, staff described variety within the core program areas and reported changing components of the offerings approximately every three to six months.
- At all the sites, staff indicated that youth had opportunities throughout the year to go on various field trips, providing exposure to new and diverse experiences and people.

Input and Decision-Making

Youth were asked about the extent to which they could choose their activities and decide what, how and when they do things at the VYSO.

- Overall, **60 percent** of youth reported having moderate to frequent opportunities for **input and decision-making**.

In analyzing organizational information, three areas in which participants could have input into what happens at the VYSO were consistently found: use of the participant's own time, the design of specific activities, and the overall functioning of the facility.

- In all the Boys and Girls Clubs and Girls Incorporated sites, youth had discretion about how they used their time when at the VYSO. At Boys and Girls Clubs, the entire day is structured around youth choice—there are activities going on around the clubhouse and youth generally move freely to the activity of their choice, or to a game room or lounge area. At Girls Incorporated, some programming took place at set hours, or youth were expected to attend specific programming for their age group when at the center. Choice was built in by using such strategies as "free" hours or periods in a day, or "free" Fridays when girls could participate in less structured activities or "hang out." As mentioned earlier, choice at the YMCAs follows a different pattern because of differences in the structure of programming. Youth typically sign up for the specific activities in which they want to participate, and come to the branch when the activity is offered. Choice is built in prior to participation, rather than on a daily or weekly basis.

- Twelve of the 15 sites offered youth the opportunity to have input into the design of specific activities by following such practices as having participants design service projects, plan special events, set goals or objectives for teams, and develop rules for tournament competition.

- Youth had input into broader aspects of facilitywide functioning in eight of the 15 sites. Practices to solicit youth input included asking youth's opinions about program offerings, having youth as board representatives, using opinion boxes or surveys of youth, and holding teen council rap sessions. Youth were also encouraged to develop rules for teen centers, for lounges and activity areas, and in some instances, for the facility as a whole. Finally, a few VYSOs also give youth the opportunity to voice their opinions at daily assemblies.

Safety

The safety measure is a single question that asked respondents how safe they feel at the VYSOs relative to other places they spend their time.

- Approximately **two-thirds** of the youth felt that the VYSO was **as safe, or safer**, than other places where they spend their time.

In urban settings, safety is a paramount concern for youth in after-school hours. VYSOs' practices reflect their desire to keep youth safe, both in getting to the facilities and when there.

- In virtually all the sites (14 of 15), access to the facility was monitored at the door or front desk. Many of the sites also require youth to sign in (and in some cases, sign out) or show ID cards.

- Fourteen of the 15 sites had written rules about behavior on the premises. The rules were either posted, written in membership handbooks, or communicated through orientation. To ensure youth's physical safety, there were particularly strict rules against fighting and gang markings.

- At eight of the 15 sites, transportation to and from the facility was provided. In some cases, this was limited to youth who participate in evening activities.

Community Service

Youth were asked to indicate whether they had participated in any community service activities in the last year.

- Almost **one-quarter** of the youth indicated they had been involved in **community service** work through a VYSO program in the past year.

Thirteen of the 15 sites had special service clubs or projects through which youth participate in community service projects or community action work. Because these opportunities were limited in comparison to the other developmental areas, a relatively small proportion of youth reported having had these experiences.

SUMMARY

Taken together, these findings tell us that these VYSOs are generally successful in providing safe settings where youth are engaged in interesting and novel activities and feel a sense of belonging and support from adults. The fact that youth are spending time in a supervised setting engaged in constructive activities is valuable in its own right. However, even more convincing evidence of the important role these organizations can play in the lives of youth, are the findings concerning the developmental experiences youth report from their participation in VYSOs. While many already believed this to be the case, these data provide systematic evidence of the programs' success.

The next chapter discusses whether and how these experiences differ for youth with different background characteristics or youth who participate differently.

VI. DEVELOPMENTAL SUPPORTS AND OPPORTUNITIES: DIFFERENCES RELATED TO PARTICIPATION PATTERNS, DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND RISK BEHAVIORS

The central focus of the study was to assess whether these VYSOs provide a majority of youth who attend with positive developmental experiences. To complete an assessment of the effectiveness of these organizations as developmental settings, additional analyses were necessary to explore whether youth who use the facility differently, and youth with different demographic characteristics or risk behaviors report more or less positive developmental experiences from VYSO participation. These analyses are intended to serve two purposes. First, they allow an assessment of whether these VYSO settings are more effective with one population of youth than with another (e.g., boys versus girls, or at-risk versus non-risk youth) or if they have found ways to reach all types of youth equally well. Second, it makes it possible to begin drawing lessons about whether different types and/or structures of programming might work better with some groups than with others.

The analyses described in this chapter begin to isolate whether and how participation patterns (i.e., how often, in what variety and how long study youth have been coming to the VYSO), demographic characteristics (i.e., poverty status, age and gender), or engagement in at-risk behavior are related to youth's experiences in VYSOs—assuming that all other characteristics of the youth are the same.[14] Further, the analyses were conducted in a way that allows an examination of whether differences in participation patterns by youth with different background characteristics and risk behaviors can partially or wholly explain why differences emerge in the extent to which youth report developmental experiences. (Specific analytic techniques used are described in Appendix B.)

During the early stages of our investigation, we realized that the answers to these questions varied greatly by organization. For example, most participants at Girls Incorporated received equal levels of developmental experiences, regardless of how often, how long or how varied their participation. In contrast, longer tenure at the Boys and Girls Clubs was related to increased levels of developmental supports and opportunities. And at the YMCAs, youth who did a greater variety of activities derived more benefits than those who engaged in fewer activities. Because of these differences, all analyses for this chapter were conducted separately by organization.

The chapter begins by documenting the extent to which a youth's pattern of participation is related to the developmental benefits he or she receives. It then examines whether youth with different demographic characteristics report similar experiences in each of the developmental areas. Finally, we explore the relationship between youth's risk behaviors and their experience of the VYSO's developmental supports and opportunities.

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[14] In this chapter only participation, demographic, and risk variables that are significantly related to each of the developmental areas at .05 or better are reported.

PARTICIPATION PATTERNS

A common-sense assumption is that how often a youth participates in activities at a VYSO would be the primary factor in explaining whether a youth received any benefit. However, the variety of activities in which a youth participates and how long they have been coming to a VYSO are also measures of participation that likely play a role in shaping youth's experiences at a VYSO. Thus, the analyses for this study include measures of all three types of participation—how often, variety and tenure—to begin to disentangle the relationships between participation patterns and youth's developmental experiences.

Only two findings related to youth participation were relatively consistent across the three organizations. First, youth who participated in a greater variety of activities or had a longer tenure at their VYSO reported more leadership opportunities. This finding suggests that leadership opportunities are not limited to one type of activity (e.g., sports or arts/crafts) or even simply to specific leadership training programs. Rather, there appear to be multiple ways and multiple settings within the organization through which youth can take on leadership roles. The importance of longer tenure may either be a result of youth becoming more familiar over time with the types of leadership options available, or staff recognizing and reaching out more to the youth with whom they are more familiar.

Second, across sites, youth who had spent more time at the VYSO felt both a stronger sense of social support from adults and a greater sense of belonging. At Boys and Girls Clubs and the YMCAs, a greater variety in activities (which most likely put them in contact with more adults) and longer tenure at the VYSO were also related to increased levels of youth's feelings of social support. Receiving social support from adults is clearly a function of the opportunity to build relationships with them. At a smaller organization—in this case, the Girls Incorporated centers—youth and staff are likely to be able to get to know each other and thus build relationships simply as a result of how frequently they see each other. Since the YMCAs and Boys and Girls Clubs serve many more youth, just spending time at the VYSO may not be enough to derive the maximum benefit. Youth appear to be most likely to build relationships with adults when they also come in contact with more adults (by engaging in more activities) and continue to be involved with those adults over time (longer membership).

Aside from these two findings, our analyses indicate that how a youth participates differs from organization to organization. At the YMCAs, engaging in a greater variety of activities (rather than how often or how long the youth had been coming) was most closely associated with higher levels of positive experiences in all seven developmental areas. Variety of activities might appear particularly relevant at the YMCAs because few youth, on average, participate in more than one type of YMCA activity, a contrast to the patterns among youth at the Boys and Girls Clubs and Girls Incorporated centers. Youth who do get involved in multiple activities at the YMCA stand out among peers who do not participate in many activities and derive more developmental benefits. But the relationship might also flow in the opposite direction: youth who have the most positive developmental experiences might be more likely to try out more areas of activity at their YMCA.

In contrast, at Boys and Girls Clubs, youth who attended with greater frequency and youth whose tenures at the clubs were longer reported higher levels of developmental experiences in all seven areas. Interestingly, tenure was the more important factor; it was more strongly related to youth's experience of social support, leadership, belonging, input and community service (five of the seven areas) than was the amount of time spent at the VYSO facility each week. This is consistent with staff explanations about an organizational culture that prizes "club kids." This is an identifiable group of youth who have spent a great deal of their time at the clubhouse over the years and are well-known by the staff. Many staff themselves report having "grown up in the club"; and interviews with staff suggested that continued involvement in the club is recognized and highly valued.

Finally, at the Girls Incorporated centers, differences in patterns of participation were not related to differences in developmental benefits, with the exception of social support from adults and belonging (which were related to frequency) and leadership (related to variety). This suggests that girls with lower levels of participation still get a relatively high level of intended program benefit.

In summary, it seems that while participation does play a role in explaining differences in youth's developmental experiences at the VYSO, the relationship is not necessarily simple or straightforward. How much more benefit youth get from participating more or for a longer time appears to be related somewhat to the size of the organization, the typical mode of participation, the structure of the programming, and the expectations staff hold about youth who have been coming to the VYSO over a long period of time.

YOUTH DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The next set of questions investigated regarded the degree to which youth with different demographic characteristics might experience different levels of supports and opportunities: Do youth from non-poverty households get more from VYSOs than do poorer youth? Do older youth experience higher levels of developmental experiences than younger youth? Do boys and girls receive equal supports and opportunities at the VYSOs?

Poverty

Overall, supports and opportunities were experienced equally by youth in each organization regardless of their poverty status. These results suggest that the developmental approach used by these organizations might be able to increase youth's chances of successfully navigating adolescence without targeting or stigmatizing impoverished youth. This finding is particularly important when considering that youth from impoverished families are disproportionately represented among teenagers who have difficulty making a positive transition to adulthood, and who ultimately require some form of social intervention.

Age

Age appears to have made a difference at all three VYSOs, with older youth generally reporting more positive experiences than younger youth. The overall positive results for older youth are interesting, given these organizations' stated concern about attracting and retaining this group. One explanation for these results could be a self-selection process, whereby youth who particularly benefit stay, while others drop out. However, it might also be that the programs are particularly beneficial for older youth. That older youth would have more opportunities than younger youth for leadership, input and decision-making indicates that the sites are responding appropriately to the increasing capacity for responsibility and need for autonomy that occur as youth move through adolescence.

Only two developmental areas at the YMCAs did not reflect these findings for older youth. Older and younger youth at the YMCAs who engage in an equivalent number of different types of activities report similar levels of opportunities to engage in interesting and challenging activities and feelings of social support from adults. However, we found that older youth at the YMCAs tended to engage in less varied types of activities, which in turn is related to lower levels of positive experiences in these two areas. Thus, by taking these differences in how younger and older youth participate at the YMCAs into account, our analyses indicate that the younger youth actually reported higher levels of opportunities for challenge and feelings of social support.

Gender

Table 17 shows differences that emerged between boys and girls. Two trends in gender differences are worth noting. First, gender differences are more pervasive at the Boys and Girls Clubs than at the YMCAs. Second, at Boys and Girls Clubs the differences tend to favor girls; at the YMCAs (when differences do occur), the opposite is true.

At the Boys and Girls Clubs, girls reported higher levels of a sense of belonging; more opportunities for interesting and challenging activities, and for input and decision-making; and more community service activities. Interviews with staff at the Boys and Girls Clubs gave no clear indication of why gender differences occur at these clubs.

At the YMCAs, girls and boys with equal amounts of variety in participation perceive the same levels of social support from adults. However, we found that on average, boys at the YMCAs engaged in a greater variety of activities. And as described earlier, at the YMCAs, more variety is related to greater levels of social support. Thus, once we take this into account, our findings suggest that girls experience lower levels of social support from adults than do boys, as a result of girls' tendency to engage in a less varied group of activities.

At the YMCAs, boys also reported more leadership experiences than did girls, regardless of how they participated. At Boys and Girls Clubs, there are no differences in the amount of

Table 17

PARTICIPANT PERCEPTIONS OF SUPPORTS AND OPPORTUNITIES (BY ORGANIZATION AND GENDER)

	BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS			GIRLS INCORPORATED			YMCA		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
Leadership:									
Mean	3.1	2.8	3.0	-	3.2	3.2	2.5	2.2	2.4
Percentage ≥ 1	78%	71%	76%		86%	86%	64%	69%	64%
Social Support from Adults:									
Mean	1.3	1.5	1.4	-	1.6	1.6	1.1	1.3	1.2
Percentage ≥ 1	70%	79%	73%		78%	78%	58%	58%	58%
Challenging and Interesting Activities:									
Mean	3.0	3.1	3.0	-	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.3	3.1
Percentage ≥ 3	59%	63%	60%		63%	63%	57%	64%	59%
Belonging:									
Mean	3.0	3.2	3.1	-	3.4	3.4	3.2	3.3	3.2
Percentage ≥ 3	57%	64%	60%		65%	65%	59%	66%	61%
Input and Decision-Making:									
Mean	3.1	3.3	3.1	-	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1
Percentage ≥ 3	56%	64%	59%		66%	66%	59%	58%	58%
Safety:									
Mean	2.1	2.0	2.0	-	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.1	2.0
Percentage ≥ 2	61%	65%	63%		67%	67%	63%	70%	65%
Community Service:									
Mean	.22	.28	.24	-	.36	.36	.19	.25	.21
Percentage ≥ 1	22%	28%	24%		36%	36%	19%	25%	21%

Source: Survey Data

leadership experiences among girls and boys who have attended the clubs for the same number of years. However, the average girl received lower levels of leadership experience than the average boy because on average, girls have attended the Boys and Girls Clubs for a shorter length of time than have boys, and a longer tenure at the clubs is related to higher levels of leadership experience. Thus, at both the YMCAs and the Boys and Girls Clubs—once we take into account girls' shorter tenure at the Boys and Girls Clubs—it appears that the typical girl was involved in fewer leadership roles in the last year compared to boys.[15]

A greater proportion of girls at the Girls Incorporated centers report having engaged in community service activities and taken on leadership roles than both boys and girls at the other youth-serving organizations. This might be due to the increased number of leadership roles available to girls by virtue of the fact that there are no boys at these centers.

Although all three national organizations emphasize leadership and community service as important developmental areas, how they operationalized this emphasis differed. Girls Incorporated staff reported that they place a particularly strong emphasis on creating multiple leadership opportunities and consciously rotate these roles to as many youth as possible. Staff at Boys and Girls Clubs indicated that the same small group of youth tended to take on multiple leadership roles. At the YMCAs, there was inconsistency in branches' decisions on whether to implement formal programs in leadership or community service.

RISK BEHAVIOR

In Chapter III, data were presented indicating that these organizations do not just serve the "good kids." A substantial number of youth who attend these VYSOs have engaged in risk behaviors: from one-fifth to one-quarter of girls at the Girls Incorporated centers, and from one-half to two-thirds of youth at the Boys and Girls Clubs and YMCAs. Programs and activities at these VYSOs do not target these youth; rather, youth pick and choose activities and how they want to participate. Therefore, it is of interest to explore whether youth receive the same intended developmental experiences, regardless of risk-behavior status.

For the most part, youth reported positive developmental experiences regardless of whether they reported engaging in any risk behaviors. All the organizations' youth reported the same level of social support from adults and engagement in community service activities regardless of their risk-behavior status. There were no differences by risk-behavior status at Girls Incorporated. At the YMCAs, risk-engaging youth and those reporting no risk behaviors had similar experiences in four of the seven developmental areas measured. However, risk-engaging youth reported greater levels of leadership opportunities, and lower levels of belonging, input and decision-making.

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[15] Results of the four-week attendance data collection summarized in Chapter IV indicate that girls participated in more formal leadership programs than did boys; the findings reported here suggest that boys have more informal leadership experiences, such as being team captains, being in charge of groups of youth, or helping out around the VYSO.

At Boys and Girls Clubs, youth who reported engaging in risk behaviors tended to get different levels of developmental experiences. On the one hand, youth who had engaged in at least one risk behavior were more likely than their non-risk peers to report opportunities for leadership roles (as was the case at the YMCAs). At the same time, youth who reported engaging in at least one risk behavior also reported lower levels of sense of belonging; fewer opportunities for input and decision-making, and for challenging and interesting activities; and indicated they felt less safe at the Boys and Girls Clubs compared to youth who had not engaged in any risk behaviors.

Why would youth with a risk behavior report higher levels of leadership than non-risk peers but lower levels in some of the other developmental areas? It might be that those same traits that lead youth to take risks in a negative way, namely a desire for new experiences and challenges, lead them to seek leadership positions within the organization. It might also be that staff make a concerted effort to channel these youth's energies in positive directions. Because these youth still feel less of a sense of belonging and perceive fewer opportunities for input and decision-making, however, it is clear that further efforts should be made to find ways to include these youth and to make them feel a part of the organization.

At Girls Incorporated centers (where there were no differences in the developmental experiences reported by youth who have and have not engaged in risk behaviors), staff may be better able to spread opportunities among all youth and provide a more cohesive environment because there are fewer youth in general. However, the heavy emphasis placed on providing girls with developmental opportunities and the training staff receive in this area could also be contributing factors. Additionally, much of the Girls Incorporated programming, particularly the educational and skill-building curriculum, might allow for a wider range of participation by all youth.

SUMMARY

Overall, there were no overarching or systematic differences in developmental benefits across organizations that could be attributed to one particular pattern of participation, a specific demographic characteristic or risk profile. Where there were differences in the extent to which youth received intended developmental experiences that depended on their level of participation, the particular relationship between participation and experience generally varied from organization to organization. At one, a variety of activities was particularly relevant; at another, longer tenure and how often a youth participated played a role in explaining differences in benefits; at the third, youth experiences tended to be similar regardless of differences in type of participation. Given these differences, it would be important for a VYSO seeking to improve the quality of youth developmental experiences to consider how their programming is provided, what the typical mode of participation is at their organization, and the extent to which the organizational culture communicates that it values regular and continued attendance by its participants.

Consistent across all organizations, youth reported similar levels of developmental experiences regardless of their poverty status. And, in several of the developmental areas (ranging from three to all seven, depending on the organization), youth who had engaged in risk behaviors derived similar or more positive benefits than those who had engaged in none. These are important results, suggesting that VYSOs are able to provide developmental experiences important for a healthy adolescence without stigmatizing youth.

VII. CONCLUSION

The results of this investigation are highly encouraging. First, the study shows that it is possible to evaluate the degree to which youth organizations are effective in providing developmental experiences to adolescents. The assessment strategy used is promising because it holds organizations or programs accountable for what they control and evaluates these settings by measuring the quality of what their programs produce now, rather than relying on an evaluation of future long-term outcomes.

Second, the sites in this study are successful in delivering the kind of developmental experiences promised by their approach to serving youth. In fact, fully 80 percent of the adolescent participants were receiving multiple developmental benefits from their experiences in these neighborhood settings. The consistency of our findings shows that it is possible to provide the kinds of supports to adolescents that current research and theory indicate are necessary to help youth prepare for adult responsibilities.

Further, these benefits are being provided for youth within the context of national organizations with large numbers of local affiliates. So these 15 exemplary sites—even if they are "the best"—indicate that within these organizations, there is a large service base on which to build. There are also other organizations—some national in scope, some entirely local—that provide these same kinds of services and that may generate the same developmental benefits. We might need significant new resources to assist the many youth who need help in transitioning to adulthood, but at least an organizational framework exists for doing so.

The developmental benefits provided by these organizations seem to accrue to all youth—regardless of poverty or risk profiles. These organizations have shown that it is possible to attract a mix of youth with a developmental approach without targeting or stigmatizing those from poor families, or those who engage in risk behaviors. This finding addresses a recent policy issue concerning whether limited youth resources should target youth defined as "at risk." The approach of these organizations presents an interesting alternative, one that serves both youth "at risk" and those who are not in a way that benefits both.

This study provides early and useful information regarding the content, importance and measurability of a youth development approach. However, we think several areas merit further study if the practical benefits of this approach are to be fully utilized. First, more work must be done on defining best practices—that is, the particular organizational practices most effective in achieving the developmental results shown here. This study presents preliminary evidence in this area, but the investigation included only a limited number and range of sites. For the same reason, the evidence on the developmental results shown here is also preliminary. A study of other youth development organizations is needed to determine whether they too are successful in providing these benefits to youth—particularly if they lack the strong infrastructure provided by national organizations that support affiliates with programming, research and staff training.

Second, a careful cost analysis is necessary in order to understand the full implications of adopting a developmental approach. There is little information currently available about such costs, and no straightforward way to obtain it, given the unpredictable way that youth use developmental services, and the way that these services are provided. Nonetheless, it is vital for policymakers and funders that careful documentation and analysis of costs be undertaken.

Finally, the results achieved by these sites occurred in the context of a facility-based approach. Many organizations, including these three, are exploring non-facility-based outreach and service strategies, particularly with older adolescents. We need to determine whether this type of approach results in similar benefits for youth.

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APPENDIX A

SITE SELECTION

Five local affiliates of each national organization were chosen for this study. We specified a core set of features that must be in place in order for us to select a site to participate in the study:

- A large number of participants (100 to 300) between the ages of 10 and 18 attend the club.
- The club's programming and activities exemplify the stated mission of the national organization.
- Sustained and significant programs are in place for teens.
- The site is located in a low-income, urban neighborhood with a poverty level of at least 20 percent, in a city with a population of at least 50,000.
- The site draws its participants from the immediate, surrounding neighborhood.
- The services provided are primarily facility-based.
- The funding is relatively stable.

In the case of YMCA and Girls Incorporated, we asked the national office to nominate 10 to 15 sites that fit the above criteria. In the case of Boys and Girls Clubs, the national office was not involved in the selection of sites; therefore, we contacted the executive directors of eight large metropolitan clubs.

We made phone contact with each of the nominated sites. During these conversations, we asked for information to verify the degree to which each site fit our baseline criteria and to gather information on the following:

- Participant Characteristics: Number of youth served per week, ages of youth served, whether both boys and girls are served, the racial and ethnic distribution of youth served, the economic characteristics of the client population.
- Staffing Characteristics: Number of full-time, part-time and volunteer staff; number or percentage of staff who work with teens; rate of staff turnover; and the adult (staff)/ youth ratio.

- Operational Information: Hours of operation; location, size and amenities of facility; peak times of the day and year for youth involvement; outreach and recruitment strategies; and incentives for youth to continue participating.

- Programs and Activity Offerings: The availability and accessibility of programs with an emphasis on teens, number of recreational and educational offerings, number of structured and unstructured activities, and the types of programs and activities offered (whether they are national, local or regional, or a mix).

For all three organizations, we then narrowed the pool to five metropolitan centers, branches and clubs that had affiliates that met our site-selection criteria and demonstrated an interest in aiding our research effort.

APPENDIX B

METHODOLOGY

DATA SOURCES

We collected data about the youth who attend the VYSOs and about the organizations, their programs and staff practices. These data were collected to allow us to describe who uses the VYSOs, how they are used, and what developmental experiences youth derive from participation. The organizational data were gathered with the intent of aligning practices with sites that were particularly good at promoting youth experiences in a developmental area. Each of the instruments, its intent and derivation are described in the following sections.

Youth Data

Attendance Data. The attendance data collection instrument was designed to address two central questions: (1) what youth come to the facility, and (2) how youth use the facility. To answer the first, we asked a series of demographic questions: date of birth, race or ethnicity, gender and an SES indicator (whether they get free lunch at school). We addressed the second question by keeping a record over a four-week period of when individuals came to the facility, how long they stayed and what they did while there.

Although we cannot generalize to annual or summer participation patterns, we attempted to select four consecutive weeks that represent typical seasonal programming and activities. Specifically, relying on input from program staff, we selected a time frame when programs were up and running (steering away from the first and last weeks of a season, when participation tends to be erratic) and when attendance data collection did not overlap with special events and major holidays.

The data collection method was fairly simple. We supplied sites with data collection cards and either assigned a unique identification number to each youth or, when appropriate, used the sites' own youth membership numbers. The identification numbers allowed us to track individual youth's participation patterns, including their time of arrival, reported time they would be leaving, and the activities in which they planned to participate. In order to collect the data, the entrance to each facility had to be staffed during all hours the site was open for youth activities. We hired, on average, two people to stop youth and ask them for the necessary information as they came into the facility. Completed attendance data cards were returned to P/PV weekly for cleaning, coding and data entry.

We used the attendance records to construct a picture of how an "average" youth member used the center or club over the time period. The attendance records allowed us to paint a fairly accurate picture of the youth participants and their participation patterns over a four-week period. In addition, the census of participation rates for all youth using the facility allowed us to assess the representativeness of our questionnaire sample in relation to all participants at the VYSO, and to weight the data as necessary. (See below for an explanation of how we weighted the questionnaire data.)

The data have some limitations, and implementing the instrument also met with challenges—each of which is described here. First, our methods relied heavily on youth reports, and while we have confidence in these reports, they are not precise. Reported time out, for example, is estimated; it could potentially change for example, depending on when a parent or older sibling arrived that day to take the youth home. However, having youth members sign out proved to be difficult enough at some sites that the number of missing cases would also have been problematic. Youth were also asked what activities they planned on doing that day. Thus, what they intended to do might occasionally have differed from what they actually did.

Second, there were a few challenges in implementing the attendance data collection, particularly at the beginning. Initially, some youth were reluctant to stop and answer questions; program staff, fortunately, had made themselves available to help persuade the youth to take time each day to answer a few questions. Although youth participants cooperated, the process took staff time and the first few days were somewhat disruptive. Finally, at some centers with multiple entrances, it was difficult to keep track of individual usage patterns; although all entrances were staffed, members occasionally slipped by or duplicate information on an individual was gathered.

Youth Questionnaire. Since measuring traditional outcomes is not in the scope of this study, our focus is on the extent to which VYSOs provide and youth have experiences in each of the seven developmental areas identified in Chapter I. Examples of the items that constitute measures of each of the seven developmental areas, their response sets and reliability coefficients are presented in Figure B1.

The questionnaires also include questions about youth demographic characteristics (age, gender, poverty status,[1] ethnicity), and a risk behavior index (whether or not the respondent reported having engaged in any of four behaviors: drinking alcohol, using drugs, gang involvement and prior arrests).[2] Measures of participation at the facility were: number of days youth participated in the previous four weeks, typical number of weekend and weekday hours

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[1] Poverty status was measured using a question about whether the youth received free or reduced-price lunch at school. This is a rough indicator of poverty, but has been used in other studies (e.g., the National Educational Longitudinal Study) in order to get a measure when only a child completes a questionnaire.

[2] There is evidence that involvement in one of these four major problem behaviors is predictive of involvement in one or more of the others and has been found to be associated with concurrent mental and physical health problems during adolescence (Dryfoos, 1990).

Figure B1

CONSTRUCT LIST WITH SAMPLE ITEMS, RESPONSE CATEGORIES AND RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS

Social Support from Adults (6 items, alpha = .81)

- About how many adult staff at NAME OF ORGANIZATION pay attention to what's going on in your life?

- About how many adult staff in NAME OF ORGANIZATION could you go to for help in an emergency?

0 None
1 Only one
2 Two or three
3 More than three

Leadership (8 items, alpha = .87)

- How often in the past year have you been in charge of a group of youth at NAME OF ORGANIZATION?

- How often in the past year have you been a peer counselor, peer tutor, or mediator (someone who helps solve fights) at NAME OF ORGANIZATION?

0 Never
1 Once or twice
2 Several times
3 Often

Input and Decision-Making (3 items, alpha = .92)

- Staff let me decide what activities I'm going to do here (at NAME OF ORGANIZATION).

- Staff give me a lot of choices about how I do things here.

1 Never
2 Almost never
3 Sometimes
4 Most of the time
5 All of the time

Figure B1 (continued)

CONSTRUCT LIST WITH SAMPLE ITEMS, RESPONSE CATEGORIES AND RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS

Belonging (12 items, alpha = .92)

- This place is a comfortable place to hang out.
- I feel like I belong here.

1 Never
2 Almost never
3 Sometimes
4 Most of the time
5 All of the time

Challenging and Interesting Activities (5 items, alpha = .77)

- I get to do things here that I don't get to do anywhere else.
- The activities here really get me interested.

1 Never
2 Almost never
3 Sometimes
4 Most of the time
5 All of the time

Safety (1 item)

- Compared to other places where you spend time, how safe do you feel when you are at NAME OF ORGANIZATION?

0 A lot less safe compared to other places
1 A little less safe compared to other places
2 Just as safe as other places
3 A little more safe compared to other places
4 A lot more safe compared to other places

Figure B1 (continued)

CONSTRUCT LIST WITH SAMPLE ITEMS, RESPONSE CATEGORIES AND RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS

Community Service (1 item)

- Have you done any community service or volunteer work in the past year? Some examples might be helping elderly or sick people, or visiting or making things for people, or participating in block clean-ups or park clean-ups?

  0 No
  1 Yes, through a NAME OF ORGANIZATION program
  2 Yes, through school or a school program
  3 Yes, through a program at another YMCA, Girls Incorporated, Boys and Girls Club or other program I go to like NAME OF ORGANIZATION

youth attended in the previous four weeks, how long youth had been coming to the facility, and how many of four different categories of activities the youth participated in over the previous four weeks. Finally, we measured reasons for and barriers to participation.

Measures of developmental supports and opportunities were adapted from a number of different sources. Youth "Sense of Belonging" was adapted from the Patterns of Adaptive Learning Strategies (PALS) belonging and social climate scales (Midgley, Maehr and Urdan, 1993). Youth engagement in "Challenging and Interesting Activities" was drawn from the PALS measure of a Task-Focused Goal Orientation scale. Youth "Input and Decision-Making" was adapted from the Rochester Assessment Package-Student (RAPS) Perceived Teacher Autonomy Support Scale (Wellborn, Connell and Pierson, 1987). The "Social Support from Adults" scale consists of a subsample of items from the URCAP adult support scale (Connell, Grossman and Resch, 1995). Items constituting the leadership scale were generated from literature on VYSO program goals and mechanisms to involve youth of different ages in meaningful leadership roles in the facility. The measure of safety consisted of one item that asked youth to rate how safe they feel at the VYSO in comparison to other places where they spend time. Participation in community service was also a one-item variable, focusing on whether the youth had done volunteer or community service through a VYSO program in the past year.

Questions gauging barriers to and reasons for participation in the specific VYSO were based primarily on the interests of the organizations. Finally, in order to construct measures of youth's activity participation within the VYSO, we obtained a seasonal calendar of offerings from each of the sites participating in the study. We then created categories to capture the breadth of structured and unstructured activities offered across all sites, and across the three national organizations for the larger study. Respondents were asked on the questionnaire whether they had participated in any of these activities in the four weeks prior to the survey administration date.

In October and November 1995 at Girls Incorporated centers and the YMCAs, and in February and March 1996 at the Boys and Girls Clubs, we administered the questionnaire to groups of youth in the 10 to 18 age range who came to the VYSO facility on one of the days of a three-day survey administration period. Survey dates were advertised on posters in the facility and letters were sent to parents and guardians of youth on the VYSOs' mailing lists explaining the study and including a toll-free number to call if they had questions or did not want their child(ren) to participate. Staff members were asked to recruit youth who participated in facility-based programs over the past year to ensure both the numbers necessary to run statistical analyses and to provide a sample with a variation in participation. To attract participants, sites chose incentives worth five dollars (e.g., $5 gift certificates to McDonald's) that were given to youth upon completion of the survey. Survey administrators read questions aloud and answered any questions the youth had. For confidentiality purposes, questions pertaining to risk behaviors were included at the end of the survey, and youth were instructed to read the questions to themselves and circle their desired response.

Although we collected data on usage patterns and participation in different activities during our attendance data collection, the four-week time frame for the attendance data and the four weeks prior to survey administration (the time frame about which several of the questions on the questionnaire were focused) were not consistent from site to site and did not always correspond to the same time frame. For this reason, we did not link a youth's responses on the questionnaire to his/her attendance records. We used the attendance records to gauge the distribution of attendance for boys and girls in different age groups and used this information to "correct" for the representativeness of the questionnaire sample by assigning weights to the questionnaire data as described in the next section.

Weighting the Questionnaire Data. Given how youth were recruited to be part of the questionnaire sample, the youth who filled out the questionnaire are not necessarily representative of the "typical participant." In particular, two biases are present: (1) youth who come every day were more likely to be picked up in our questionnaire sample, and (2) some sites were more aggressive than others in recruiting youth who were not frequent attenders. Therefore, to make the information gathered from the questionnaires more representative of the youth who typically attend the centers during a month, we reweighted the observations from the questionnaire sample so that attendance patterns reflect the attendance patterns seen in the four-week window of attendance data collection.

Specifically, using the attendance data, we calculated percentages of youth in each age range who had come to the center once or twice, three to six times, seven to 12 times, and 13 or more times (categories that are similar to those used in the questionnaire to gauge participation rates: once or twice, about once a week, a few times a week, and every day or almost every day). Next, we took the questionnaire data and made each youth's responses count more or less depending on the youth's self-report of how frequently he or she had been to the center in the previous four weeks. We used these data—weighted to more accurately reflect the attendance patterns of the site—to examine overall means on each of the constructs that would be less biased by the questionnaire recruitment strategy. Table B1 provides an example of the process by which we weighted the data.

Organizational Data

Staff and Executive Director Interview. P/PV, along with other consultants, developed protocols to be used on the first round of site visits. The interviews focused on detailing organizational features, characteristics of activities and program practices believed to be both directly and indirectly related to youth's experience of supports and opportunities.

In developing our interview protocol, we drew on ideas and expertise from a variety of sources. Although the literature on organizational theory provided no research specific to these types of agencies, we included and adapted measures examined in other organizational studies (Gephardt, 1992; Scott, 1992) that based on our knowledge of VYSOs, we knew were applicable. We also held a forum of researchers specializing in the study of organizations.

Table B1

ILLUSTRATION OF PROCESS USED TO WEIGHT THE QUESTIONNAIRE DATA USING THE ATTENDANCE DATA

	ATTENDANCE DATA			SURVEY DATA		WEIGHT	WEIGHTED	SURVEY
BOYS	PARTICIPATION	#	%	PARTICIPATION	#		#	%
10-12				0 or Missing	2	-	0	0
	1-2x/Month	16	23.5	1-2x/Month	4	$^{16}/_{4}$	7.5	23.5
	3-6x	11	16.2	Once/Week	2	$^{11}/_{2}$	5.2	16.2
	7-12x	17	25.0	Few times/Week	10	$^{17}/_{10}$	8.0	25.0
	13+	24	35.3	Almost every day	16	$^{24}/_{16}$	11.3	35.3
13-15				0 or Missing	1	-	0	0
	1-2x/Month	20	31.3	1-2x/Month	9	$^{20}/_{9}$	11.6	31.3
	3-6x	15	23.4	Once/Week	2	$^{15}/_{2}$	8.7	23.4
	7-12x	14	21.9	Few times/Week	12	$^{14}/_{12}$	8.1	21.9
	13+	15	23.4	Almost every day	14	$^{15}/_{14}$	8.7	23.4
16-18				0 or Missing	2	-	0	0
	1-2x/Month	1	8.3	1-2x/Month	5	$^{1}/_{5}$	1.7	8.3
	3-6x	3	25.0	Once/Week	1	$^{3}/_{1}$	5.0	25.0
	7-12x	3	25.0	Few times/Week	3	$^{3}/_{3}$	5.0	25.0
	13+	5	41.7	Almost every day	11	$^{5}/_{11}$	8.3	41.7

Table B1 (continued)

ILLUSTRATION OF PROCESS USED TO WEIGHT THE QUESTIONNAIRE DATA USING THE ATTENDANCE DATA

	ATTENDANCE DATA			SURVEY DATA		WEIGHT	WEIGHTED	SURVEY
GIRLS	PARTICIPATION	#	%	PARTICIPATION	#		#	%
10-12	1-2x/Month	6	27.3	1-2x/Month	2	$^{10}/_{2}$	8.2	45.5
	3-6x	4	18.2	Once/Week	0			
	7-12x	9	40.9	Few times/Week	2	$^{9}/_{2}$	7.4	40.9
	13+	3	13.6	Almost every day	14	$^{3}/_{14}$	2.4	13.6
13-15	1-2x/Month	1	14.3	1-2x/Month	1	$^{3}/_{1}$	3.0	42.9
	3-6x	2	28.6	Once/Week	0			
	7-12x	2	28.6	Few times/Week	1	$^{2}/_{1}$	2.0	28.6
	13+	2	28.6	Almost every day	4	$^{2}/_{4}$	2.0	28.6
16-18	1-2x/Month	2	25.0	1-2x/Month	2	$^{4}/_{2}$	3.0	50.0
	3-6x	2	25.0	Once/Week	0			
	7-12x	1	12.5	Few times/Week	1	$^{1}/_{1}$	.8	12.5
	13+	3	37.5	Almost every day	3	$^{3}/_{3}$	2.2	37.5

NOTE: In cases where no survey respondents fit a participation response category (e.g., once/week), that category is collapsed with an adjacent category.

The purpose of the forum was to further delineate and refine important organizational concepts, specifically as they might relate to youth development. The information we gathered from the forum along with our review of the literature informed our decisions about organizational features on which the study should focus. These measures included: level of technology and equipment, facilities, size, rate of staff turnover, and resources available (volunteers, funding, budgeting).

In addition to organizational theory, theories from effective schools/effective students literature gave us insight into evaluating VYSOs. In particular, we drew from a theoretical approach that examined how structures within effective schools and effective classrooms are linked to effective student behaviors (Epstein, 1987). We drew from this approach to develop measures of staff practices and organizational policies. For example, we included measures of the range of activities provided, how youth are grouped within these activities, and if and how reward structures are used.

Additionally, we drew from a recent qualitative study of VYSOs, namely, McLaughlin, Irby and Langman's *Urban Sanctuaries* (1994). This study describes features of VYSOs found to be attractive to youth. We therefore developed questions to assess the study sites in terms of these features—i.e., the extent to which they offer a generous number and variety of opportunities, provide real responsibility and real work, and encourage self-discipline through clear and consistent rules and expectations.

Lastly, we relied on the VYSOs' own spokespersons to provide us with insights into relevant and important organizational qualities and activities that they saw as part of their mission. During extensive interviews, staff were asked about rules and discipline policies, practices with regard to formal and informal interactions with and knowledge of the youth, strategies for providing leadership and decision-making opportunities for youth, and mechanisms for recognizing youth's successes and accomplishments. Staff were also asked about the activities offered during the school months, including information about the goals of each activity; its presentation and duration; the number of staff, volunteers, peer leaders and youth who participate; and opportunities within a given activity for youth to take leadership roles.

Because our instruments capture a wide range of organizational characteristics and staff practices, and give detailed descriptions of activities and club policies, interviews tended to be lengthy. Separate protocols were developed for representatives of the metropolitan association, the branch or executive director, program coordinators, and instructors or facilitators. Interviews lasted from one hour (metropolitan representative and instructors or facilitators) to roughly four hours (branch or executive directors).

ANALYSIS STRATEGY

Path analysis, using LISREL 7 (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1989), was used to assess how youth's demographic characteristics and participation patterns were related to the six dependent variables representing areas of developmental supports and opportunities, as well as to assess whether differences among sites could be fully explained by these characteristics. Path analysis involves the estimation of the coefficients of a set of linear structural equations representing the hypothesized relationships. LISREL estimated all the structural coefficients of the path models simultaneously. LISREL was used for estimating models for six of the supports and opportunities: leadership, social support from adults, belonging, challenging and interesting activities, input and decision-making, and safety.

Each supports and opportunities measure ($Y_{4,j}$) was estimated in a system of four structural equations, which take the form:

$$Y_{4,j} = a_{4,j} + g_{1,j}X_{1,j} + \ldots + g_{q,j}X_{q,j} + b_{1,j}Y_{1,j} + b_{2j}Y_{2j} + b_3Y_{3,j} + e_{4,j}$$

$$Y_{3,j} = a_{3,j} + g_{1,j}X_{1,j} + \ldots + g_{q,j}X_{q,j} + b_{1,j}Y_{1,j} + b_2Y_{2,j} + e_{3,j}$$

$$Y_{2,j} = a_{2,j} + g_{1,j}X_{1,j} + \ldots + g_{q,j}X_{q,j} + b_{1,j}Y_{1,j} + e_{2,j}$$

$$Y_{1,j} = a_{1,j} + g_{1,j}X_{1,j} + \ldots + g_{q,j}X_{q,j} + e_{1,j}$$

$$j = 1 \text{ to } 6$$

where:

$Y =$ ($Y_{1,j}$,$Y_{2,j}$,$Y_{3,j}$,$Y_{4,j}$) are the jointly dependent variables.

$Y_{1,j}$ = how long youth has been participating.

$Y_{2,j}$ = number of types of activities in which participated over past four weeks (of art, education, sports, leadership).

$Y_{3,j}$ = amount of time spent in last four weeks.

$Y_{4,j}$ = the supports and opportunity measure j.

$X =$ (X_1,X_2,...,X_q) are the explanatory variables.

$e =$ structural disturbance term or residual, representing an aggregate of all known and unknown influences of the Y's that are uncorrelated with the X's.

$a =$ intercept term for each of the four equations.

$g,b =$ coefficients.

The explanatory variables (X) included in the model were:

- age (number of years).
- gender (1=female, 0 = male).
- received free or reduced-price lunch (1=yes, 0 = no).
- reported any of four risk-taking behaviors (1=yes, 0 = no).
- site (4 dummy variables representing Girls Incorporated sites, 5 for each of the other organizations).

Models assessing the effects of demographic characteristics, risk-taking and participation variables were estimated. The participation variables were examined as potential mediators of the relationship between demographic and risk-taking variables and the supports and opportunities outcome variable ($Y_{4,j}$). LISREL calculated the indirect and direct effects from the estimated parameters of the model. Total effects were calculated as the sum of direct and all indirect effects.

A two-tailed t-test was used to assess whether each coefficient was statistically not equal to zero. Those estimates not equal to zero at a .05 or better level of significance are considered significant for the purposes of this report.

Logistic regresion analysis, using maximum likelihood estimation, was used to estimate the model for the dichotomous dependent variable, participation in community service activities. The model estimated was:

$$\log (p / [1-p]) = a + g_1X_1 + g_2X_2 + \ldots + g_qX_q + e$$

where: p = the probability that the youth had community service experiences at the VYSO

$1-p$ = the probability that the youth had no community service experiences at the VYSO

e = disturbance term, on a logit scale

a,g = coefficients, on a logit scale

X = $(X_1,X_2,\ldots,X_q)$ are the explanatory variables

The same explanatory variables were included as in the LISREL path models, and the participation variables were also included as explanatory variables.

APPENDIX C

RISK BEHAVIORS

Results presented in Tables C1 through C6 are described in Chapter III. The question about suspension, presented in Table C1, was read aloud to the youth completing the survey. For confidentiality purposes, for the remainder of the risk questions, presented in Tables C2 through C6, youth were asked to read the questions to themselves and circle the appropriate response. Because these questions were left blank by youth more often than those that were read aloud, the percentage of youth who are missing data on these questions is included in the tables.

Table C1

RISK ACTIVITIES FOR VYSO PARTICIPANTS AGED 10 TO 18 BY GENDER FOR EACH SITE: SUSPENSIONS

Survey Question: Has R ever been suspended from school?

	MALE			FEMALE		
	YES	NO	MISSING	YES	NO	MISSING
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS						
Boston (South Boston)	38%	62%	0%	20%	80%	0%
Chicago (Logan Square)	65	34	0	49	50	0
Denver (Owen Branch)	44	53	3	24	76	0
New York (Hoe Avenue)	30	63	7	26	74	0
San Francisco (Columbia Park)	39	60	0	29	71	0
GIRLS INCORPORATED						
Dallas (West Dallas)	-	-	-	15%	84%	0%
Newark DE (Greater Newark)	-	-	-	36	64	0
Omaha (Development Center)	-	-	-	28	71	0
Rapid City	-	-	-	10	90	0
Sioux City (Westside Center)	-	-	-	11	8	0
YMCA						
Flushing (Beacon and Main Site)	22%	77%	1%	10%	89%	0%
Fort Wayne (Old Fort)	54	46	0	31	69	0
Kansas City (Linwood)	73	26	0	58	39	3
Newark NJ	46	54	0	17	83	0
San Antonio (Davis-Scott)	51	49	0	20	80	0

Table C2

RISK ACTIVITIES FOR VYSO PARTICIPANTS AGED 10 TO 18 BY GENDER FOR EACH SITE: ALCOHOL USE

Survey Question: Did R drink alcohol in last four weeks?

	MALE			FEMALE		
	YES	NO	MISSING	YES	NO	MISSING
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS						
Boston (South Boston)	34%	56%	10%	15%	75%	10%
Chicago (Logan Square)	27	55	18	36	62	2
Denver (Owen Branch)	20	54	26	19	72	9
New York (Hoe Avenue)	32	54	15	30	70	0
San Francisco (Columbia Park)	20	73	6	42	58	0
GIRLS INCORPORATED						
Dallas (West Dallas)	-	-	-	5%	84%	11%
Newark DE (Greater Newark)	-	-	-	20	74	5
Omaha (Development Center)	-	-	-	8	84	7
Rapid City	-	-	-	40	53	7
Sioux City (Westside Center)	-	-	-	27	72	0
YMCA						
Flushing (Beacon and Main Site)	16%	80%	3%	14%	85%	1%
Fort Wayne (Old Fort)	28	63	8	11	83	6
Kansas City (Linwood)	41	53	6	30	66	4
Newark NJ	35	58	7	24	74	1
San Antonio (Davis-Scott)	34	59	7	30	70	0

Table C3

RISK ACTIVITIES FOR VYSO PARTICIPANTS AGED 10 TO 18 BY GENDER FOR EACH SITE: DRUG ABUSE

Survey Question: Did R use any drug to get high in last 4 weeks?

	MALE			FEMALE		
	YES	NO	MISSING	YES	NO	MISSING
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS						
Boston (South Boston)	34%	56%	9%	16%	68%	16%
Chicago (Logan Square)	25	52	23	24	74	2
Denver (Owen Branch)	20	53	26	26	74	0
New York (Hoe Avenue)	14	81	5	2	96	1
San Francisco (Columbia Park)	6	90	5	37	63	0
GIRLS INCORPORATED						
Dallas (West Dallas)	-	-	-	5%	88%	7%
Newark DE (Greater Newark)	-	-	-	2	93	5
Omaha (Development Center)	-	-	-	0	99	1
Rapid City	-	-	-	9	84	7
Sioux City (Westside Center)	-	-	-	4	95	0
YMCA						
Flushing (Beacon and Main Site)	7%	87%	4%	3%	96%	0%
Fort Wayne (Old Fort)	25	60	14	3	93	4
Kansas City (Linwood)	25	70	4	17	81	3
Newark NJ	17	77	5	4	95	1
San Antonio (Davis-Scott)	29	68	3	5	95	0

Table C4

RISK ACTIVITIES FOR VYSO PARTICIPANTS AGED 10 TO 18 BY GENDER FOR EACH SITE: SEXUAL ACTIVITY

Survey Question: Has R ever had sexual intercourse?

	MALE			FEMALE		
	YES	NO	MISSING	YES	NO	MISSING
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS						
Boston (South Boston)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Chicago (Logan Square)	44%	37%	19%	31%	51%	18%
Denver (Owen Branch)	31	42	27	40	48	14
New York (Hoe Avenue)	47	32	21	17	77	6
San Francisco (Columbia Park)	23	69	7	32	68	0
GIRLS INCORPORATED						
Dallas (West Dallas)	-	-	-	8%	87%	5%
Newark DE (Greater Newark)	-	-	-	9	70	21
Omaha (Development Center)	-	-	-	2	90	8
Rapid City	-	-	-	3	82	14
Sioux City (Westside Center)	-	-	-	5	84	11
YMCA						
Flushing (Beacon and Main Site)	16%	80%	4%	5%	93%	2%
Fort Wayne (Old Fort)	59	28	12	17	80	3
Kansas City (Linwood)	57	35	8	8	84	7
Newark NJ	43	43	14	12	87	1
San Antonio (Davis-Scott)	30	56	14	15	82	3

Table C5

RISK ACTIVITIES FOR VYSO PARTICIPANTS AGED 10 TO 18 BY GENDER FOR EACH SITE: GANGS

Survey Question: Is R a member of a gang?

	MALE			FEMALE		
	YES	NO	MISSING	YES	NO	MISSING
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS						
Boston (South Boston)	29%	58%	12%	27%	58%	15%
Chicago (Logan Square)	14	67	18	1	93	6
Denver (Owen Branch)	11	63	26	15	84	0
New York (Hoe Avenue)	10	84	5	11	88	1
San Francisco (Columbia Park)	7	87	5	7	87	5
GIRLS INCORPORATED						
Dallas (West Dallas)	-	-	-	0%	93%	7%
Newark DE (Greater Newark)	-	-	-	0	96	4
Omaha (Development Center)	-	-	-	9	88	3
Rapid City	-	-	-	17	70	13
Sioux City (Westside Center)	-	-	-	1	99	0
YMCA						
Flushing (Beacon and Main Site)	4%	94%	2%	22%	74%	3%
Fort Wayne (Old Fort)	18	68	13	0	96	4
Kansas City (Linwood)	31	64	4	14	84	1
Newark NJ	8	82	9	2	97	1
San Antonio (Davis-Scott)	5	92	2	0	100	0

Table C6

RISK ACTIVITIES FOR VYSO PARTICIPANTS AGED 10 TO 18 BY GENDER FOR EACH SITE: ARRESTS

Survey Question: Has R ever been arrested?

	MALE			FEMALE		
	YES	NO	MISSING	YES	NO	MISSING
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS						
Boston (South Boston)	39%	45%	15%	5%	60%	34%
Chicago (Logan Square)	55	26	18	33	65	2
Denver (Owen Branch)	34	40	26	52	48	0
New York (Hoe Avenue)	15	80	5	8	92	0
San Francisco (Columbia Park)	15	80	5	10	89	0
GIRLS INCORPORATED						
Dallas (West Dallas)	-	-	-	2%	93%	5%
Newark DE (Greater Newark)	-	-	-	4	91	5
Omaha (Development Center)	-	-	-	3	91	6
Rapid City	-	-	-	19	74	7
Sioux City (Westside Center)	-	-	-	4	95	0
YMCA						
Flushing (Beacon and Main Site)	10%	87%	3%	4%	95%	0%
Fort Wayne (Old Fort)	16	70	13	0	96	4
Kansas City (Linwood)	32	64	4	5	94	1
Newark NJ	20	74	6	7	92	1
San Antonio (Davis-Scott)	29	68	3	15	85	0